

5. The Apot refers to expenses incurred at the time of religious o after death and at times of illness or hardship.
6. A.M. Meerworth, Monograph on Khasis: *The Andamanese, 1 Hill Tribes of Assam*, Guide Book 2, Ethnographical Galler Museum, Calcutta. (1919) p. 35.
7. C. Nakane, op. cit., pp. 125-138
8. P.R.T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (1914) p. 127.
9. T.D. Hooker, *Himalayan Jaurals*, Vol. 2 (1855) p. 486.
10. Bareh op. cit , (1967) pp. 326-327
11. Cockburn, "Notes on Stone Implements from the Khasi Hil Vellore district, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, X' XVI (1897), p. 133.
12. Logan, "Papers on the Ethnology of the Indo-Pacific Islands' of the *Indian Archipalego* (Singapore, 1850-1857).
13. E. Kuhon, *Beitrag Zur Sprachen-Kunde Histerindiene*, (1889)
14. P.R.T. Gurdon, op. cit., (1914) p 201.
15. G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India* (Calcutta 1904) Vol
16. R.S Lyngdoh, 'In Memory of U Soso Tham', *Meghalaya* (Shillong, Sep. 1972) p. 4-7.
17. Also spelt Kists.
18. L. Sachdeva, 'Kwarı (betel) Among the Khasis' *Eastern . logist*, Vol. XX No Z (Dec., 1957-1958) p. 107.
19. U.R. Ehrenfels, "Khası Kinship Terminology in Four . Anthropos Vol. 48 (1953) pp. 396—412.
20. P.R.T. Gurdon, op. cit., (1914). p. 155.
21. *ibid.* (1914) p. 38.
22. W. Robinson, *Assam* (1856) p. 33.
23. T. Oldham, *Geology of the Khasi Hills*, (1863), p. 44.
24. Hunter, *A statistical Account of Assam* Vol. I & II (Lond p. 231.,

# 3

## Khasi Niam: An Overview

Any society is best understood by the mores and values woven into its religious fabric. For, religion verily forms the sheet anchor for social conduct and behaviour, more so in technologically less advanced societies. A study of Khasi culture thus becomes complete only alongside a study in detail of the Khasi religion (*Niam*). Moreover, much emphasis is laid on proselytisation. Hence a study of Khasi religion would also help in assessing the impact of the work of missionaries on Khasi society.

Religion has been the subject of different interpretations. Yet, it has been universally accepted as a system of beliefs and practices, found in every culture, that formalises the concept of the relation between man and his environment. Durkheim opines that religion embodies the idea of a supernatural world and of personified supernatural forces.<sup>1</sup> Ceremonies, rituals and observances are used to communicate with the supernatural, and certain persons are believed to have greater access to these. As Winick rightly observes, since religion creates a group's members in a condition of solidarity and gives a base to social interaction, it is a symbolic statement of the social order.

Religion suggests a system of authority and the dominant view is that it enables us to know what is right. It uses imagination to express itself. Indeed, it is characterised

belief in, and an emotional attitude towards, things or Beings, and a formal role of approach. There are, usually, myths connected with the beliefs. In both the form and content of the beliefs of beliefs may prevail in one society and among the Khasis, for instance, belief in ancestors with belief in numerous other spiritual agencies with an ancestor cult or totemism.

Religious beliefs form specially significant in primitive culture. Tylor's definition of culture or civilization is that complex whole of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and manners and habits acquired by man as a member, in a similar strain has defined culture to be knowledge, beliefs, customs, arts and technologies. In tribal life, religion and other facets are inter-linked; these tended to be inseparable in the past.

Lyngdoh asserted in his talks on "Khasi Culture". 'Indeed, the Khasi ethos is understood by a study of the foundations of animism; sanctity of the clan and inter-clan relations in the Khasi religion (*Niam*)'.

Two interpretations of the word '*Niam*' are:

1. *Niam im* : Firm reasons for having a faith
2. *Nia ba im* : Living covenant that cannot be broken

On the other hand, it indicates a true world that lives for ever. In itself, various opinions have been given. However, those of non-Khasi scholars are listed below. Some call the Khasi religion as 'a rather vague cult of spirits supposed to live in trees, mountain peaks, etc.' Others connect snake-worship connected with human sacrifices. Some interpret the Khasi religion as a form used to avert misfortunes, adding that the Khasis are 'not a demon worship or a jumble of enchantments and sorceries who are sorcerers.' Gurdon has defined it as 'demonism or spirit worship, or rather, the propitiation of good and bad, on certain occasions, prior to a venture.'<sup>8</sup> The Census of India 1961 says, 'The Khasis is a rude animism or demon worship'. The Khasis themselves have their own

## I NIAM. AN OVERVIEW

religion. Bareh's opinion is that Khasi is polytheistic and animistic though in the beginning, monotheistic.<sup>5</sup> Roy gives the essence of Khasi religion in *Tip Briew*, suggesting that religion is knowledge of God alone, but also of men.<sup>6</sup> Lyngdoh further elaborates that the Khasi religion is the beginning of all things and in creation. The concepts in the *Niam* viz, 1. Divinity for the living and 3. Religion for the dead are evident. (illus. 11) Rabon Singh<sup>7</sup> in his elaboration says that prayers are first offered to God and later to other deities. He opines that monotheism was the key to the method of divination in Khasi religion as suggesting two ways : one for the living, the house of God (*Ing U Blei*) and one for the dead, the ancestral home. God manifests himself in different forms in groves, forests, hillocks, peaks and rivers. In these places, these became places of worship. In Khasi religion does have a pantheon of gods. It is wrong to say that Khasi religion is basically animistic as Bareh says.

Bareh contradicts the interpretation of modern scholars as animism, or spirit worship, or invocation of spirits both good and evil, on occasions especially in times of trouble.<sup>8</sup> He argues that when afflicted by fear or evil spirits, in his soul the conception of God. But, elsewhere, speaking of Khasi religion, the following expression has been used to study<sup>9</sup> 'The original religion of the tribes is to be called Animism...the attribution of spirits and phenomena. Their belief will appear to bear in mind their habitat. They believe in goddesses and in devils or evil spirits who cause illness and bring bad luck to the family. The Khasis believe that their religion is a way to show man how to restore the broken link between God and Man. They have a strong belief in *Shaw* (God the Creator). Thus all that they do, sacrifice, prayer, naming of a child, cremation, is just an attempt to find that way back to God.'

be present in all human beings. He gave the  
 be monopolised by no clan, village or state.

'He forbade marrying within the clan. He  
 I also gave free will and the gift of intelligence.  
 Him there is no caste system. He keeps c  
 ck of man. He may reward or He may not  
 rld or in the next. God intended the brother  
 be universal. The universe, a temporary at  
 ne time. Since, when a man dies, he cannot c  
 bit of hair, or even a tiny thread, he must ear  
 nesty and neither covet nor enjoy the wealth  
 ist look towards the eternal house of God,  
 lives in a clean manner, he leaves for the ho  
 e he will go to the bottom of Hell.'

Roy insists that anything wrong or un-godly  
 ep a man away from God. Stealing, claiming  
 ything behind the back of others, being cunnin  
 ultery (*Klim*), corruption, greed and picking up  
 be avoided. Creating enemies is forbidden; pa  
 id elders are to be respected. Ill-treatment  
 llow-beings is forbidden. Mercy, frankness in  
 lk are strongly advised. Idleness is condemn  
 inking and indebtedness are to be avoided. T  
 a and therefore taboo. The making or kee  
 rage at home is forbidden. God is formle  
 tempts to symbolise God is foolish and com  
 ur away from Truth.

Khasi religion does not believe in the ordi  
 monasteries, in temples, in pagodas, churches  
 ; Lyngdoh insists. Tolerance is the core of th  
 does not believe in the monopoly of religious cer  
 ne. It respects the basic tenets of all religion  
 eligions propagated by the missionaries, Khasi  
 claim superiority over other faiths, a point ela  
 he book. Roy's opinion is that the Khasis be  
 created many races and to each he gave  
 worship or religion to glorify Him according to  
 down from their forefathers.<sup>11</sup> The principle  
 each religion would be the same. Even in t  
 he orthodox Khasi does not attach great impor

## NIAM. AN OVERVIEW

h, or mosque for the fulfilment of his re  
ys maximum stress on the observance  
deed during this lifetime. Khasi *Niam* is  
reflects both man and God.

Khasi oral tradition (*Ki Parom*) corrobor  
s of Khasi religion. In the beginning, m  
n and earth were near each other, and  
course with God. While the fact is  
uty of man's fall, how he fell into sin is  
ions narrate the following Khasi legend.  
nitors of the Khasis were the seven  
*new trep*) who came down from heav  
At first they stayed on a peak joined to  
golden ladder. These seven families prac  
occupation given to them by God. They  
e *Khyndai trep*; (the nine families associa  
messengers) these seven clans never le  
ments. The nine messenger clans *visited*  
day using the golden ladder which li  
At sunset, they returned to heaven  
ladder. Later on, the seven clans int  
up the God-given occupation of cult  
e their allegiance to God. Because of th  
en with earth was severed. Then, the coc  
ator. Through his mediation, the conne  
red, though not to the same extent a  
er, as the saviour and liberator of m  
to be the foundation of the Khasi reli  
d of the creation of the world is in con  
rn of other tribal legends and compares  
legends of many recognised religions.  
Khasi scholars have expressed an opin  
ning, as a result of an inherent fear of gh  
propitiated, there was an infiltration o  
s, worship of nature emerged and there gr  
er of numerous water and mountain  
le from foreign invasions, epidemics a  
worship was observed from time to ti  
and family sacrifices. As per the group  
sis perhaps developed a consciousness of

se of awe towards God emerged—prayers, were offered to Him. Various beliefs grew of evil spirits who had to be propitiated. The official and propitiatory acts and ceremonies became hereditary. According to the seasons of harmony with changes in nature, a number of ple rejoicings and celebrations came into significance in relation to the natural and supernatural. There were spring festivals, prayers for coming rain and paddy transplantation ceremonies of events in an individual's life from birth to associated with supernatural beliefs; and there were ceremonies and prayers connected with childbirth, ceremonial purification of the mother and child. There was also a belief in methods through which misfortunes could be averted.

*U Blei* (God) and his feminine counterpart were supreme. God is said to be Omnipotent and Omnipresent. The following epithets

dominance of the monotheistic trait in the Khasi

1. *U Blei U Trai Kynrad*: God the Infinite
2. *U Blei U Nongbuh Nongthaw*: God the
3. *U Blei U Shihajar Nguh*: God the Over
4. *U Blei U Nongsam Nongbuh Bynta*: God of Human Fate.
5. *U Blei Noirang Nathian*: God the Omnipotent

Most of the rites and sacrifices were cited to *U Blei* and through her, the Khasis cited the divine providence and forgiveness. She was an embodiment of the divine law and was bestower of material prosperity and spiritual happiness. She was to empower and punish the devils and wicked men and the human soul. Mac-Cormack<sup>14</sup> mentions the great Khasi deities who in reality, were aspects of the one Deity. Informants from Nongkrem and Nongkrem (err) also spoke of a few other deities: *U Blei L* (the hearth (generally called *Khuri*) and *U L* (the hearth deity). Barch tells us that some deities

## NIAM: AN OVERVIEW

*Khyrdop* meaning gods of highways associated with the state, and some were known as deities.<sup>15</sup> Among other personified deities *Phan Khimai* and *Phan Khrpad* were believed to destroy and exterminate evil spirits and ghosts. The God of burial. The deity was discarding by name and was considered to be propitiated with sacrifices by members of the family as well as by some priestly class members over the peak. The *Kyllang* rock was a warrior deity who is believed to have fought against another deity of the *Sympet*. This is another renowned deity propitiated by the *Swer* family. The *Rilang* river on the west was propitiated by the *sylens* of the west on its banks. Thus, the good and evil deities of the region were the basic foundation of the culture of the two angles. The bond of religion brought the Khasis. It was also used as a therapy to deal with angry or evil deities who require propitiation by other powerful evil deities, who when propitiated became a person's enemies.

Angry spiritual powers were *U Rih*, who brought cholera. These were appeased by offerings. Offerings of a fowl or other spirits—*Thynrei* and *Sapa*. *U Sian* god of small-pox was not appeased. Cause ascertained by divination.

MacCormack describes three categories of 'deities'.<sup>16</sup> These three, mentioned earlier, protect places (such as villages, groves or fields) and deities of measles and smallpox. The first two categories are simply 'Mother or Goddess.' The earth is peopled by two types of demons and water demons who cause all natural and otherwise inexplicable events, and are instruments of sorcerers. Apart from the earth and in dreams, the Khasis attached significance to mystic numbers, and to the colours.

Belief in evil spirits was so strong that



to houses, waters, farms or jungles believe in them. Sacred groves believed to be inhabited till preserved. In spite of this, to conclude one, that Khasi religion is a crude form of animism is correct.<sup>17</sup>

The influence of Hindu deities is evident on *Ka Lei Hukum* or *Synshar* is said by some to be a *Yamsar* of the Hindus. In the village *Shella*, the goddess *Chandi* is still worshipped, but it is only this worship began, although it has been for many centuries. The village *Shella* is the village in the Khasi Hills where a Hindu deity is worshipped. One of the village and in the form of an idol mentioned earlier, the Khasi religion forbids the making of images of the deity. Nor is the making of a statue permitted.

Under the influence of the neighbouring Hindu water goddess, *Kupli*, was propitiated. *Biskait* of the Khasis adopted from the Hindu deity the festivity dance of the *Bhoi* area, which is generally believed to be an inter-mixture of Garo and Khasi. Offerings are made to the Goddess *Lukhimai*. The influence of the *Shakti* cult is also felt in the customs of the Khasis in certain areas. Taken up, generally, the nature of Khasi deities, departed members, the Khasi deities are anthropomorphic, and have all the qualities of an ordinary human being. The worshippers believe that the deities grow in strength in course of time; it can be prevented by regular sacrifices<sup>18</sup>.

### Other influences of Hinduism

Like most other tribal religions, animism is a part of Khasi religion. Tylor, who perhaps, is the originator of 'animism' writes: 'It divides into two great parts of one consistent doctrine: first concerning the individual creatures capable of continued life or death or destruction of the body; secondly, upward to the rank of powerful deities who are believed to effect or control the events of the world.'

## THE KHASIS: AN OVERVIEW

and man's life here and hereafter; and it was they held intercourse with man and received pleasure from human actions. Belief in such activity, naturally and perhaps inevitably, to active participation, Khasi animism is a basis of popularizing the many movements and changes present in the world of things with the theory of a being which has enough activity to affect human beings as a human being animated by life and will. The belief in the presence of a soul and a future

### After life

The Khasis had a definite belief in the here and in death and after life. The earth and everything on it was believed to be created by God and everything had its individual soul. As MacCormack has said, "There is no great earth deity for it was God who created the earth and it is inhabited by the wandering souls of the dead." If full death rites were not performed; the deceased lost his potentiality for enjoying an afterlife and his fate depended on his receiving proper deification from the members of his clan. During a funeral, the village was stopped and every resident participated. For several years, an entire clan gathered to witness the removal of the bones of recently deceased sib mates from their ancestral abodes to the great clan cairn that was in the possession of the eldest daughter, descended from the clan and was the youngest daughter. The elaborate ceremony, lasting five days, was important; for, when the bones were finally resting with those of his ancestors, it was understood that his soul was resting in the house of God. This was the "highest bliss".<sup>19</sup>

### Human Sacrifice

Human sacrifice, a practice common to many primitive societies, existed among the very early Khasis. It was later replaced by the burning of human effigies made of animals such as pig, goat or the monkey. In some instances effigies were burnt, or pigs, goats

trified before the sowing of seeds, or starting rice (during *Pomblang*) sacrifice, or during *phli* water goddess, or when the spirit pleased. According to Barch, legends narrate sacrifices were associated with the erection of a sacrifice was generally during the major festival and these were connected with their livelihood. Any major (state) and minor (village) festival. During sacrifices, communion with the dead. According to an eighty-six year old informant, animals were sacrificed during the cult of fertility offered to *U Blei* to give rain and to look after the dowry was ill and could not attend to her vegetables dressed thus: 'Do not think that I have neglected you; I was not well. Do not have any illness then believed that the vegetables would grow. Her carefully tended vegetables would.

### ancestors-worship

Ancestor-worship was an important feature of the religion. Barch tells that the conception of ancestor worship maintains the link with the dead by the continuation of funeral ceremonies.<sup>21</sup> The offerings were so simple, and sometimes made when thought necessary, according to Gurdon.<sup>22</sup> The glorification consisted of the appeasement of the deceased by offerings of food and other material presents as intimately associated with funeral ceremonies. The ancestors were to be appeased. It was believed to have become supernatural beings, powerful, having enough power to assist and bless the living to grow and prosper. The system aimed at the material and moral happiness of the family. Most of the ancestors were *Suidnia* (maternal uncle), *U Thawlang* (father's progenitor), *Ka lawbei*, were held in high reverence because they left their marks upon the descendants. These three ancestors were the deities addressed to the ancestors during the ceremonies and funeral ceremonies are not clear. The reverence shown. Regarding ancestors, it is

## NIAM: AN OVERVIEW

ers whether supplication is to generalise secular first ancestors of a Khasi's own matrilineal descent. The distinction does not seem to matter. Proper rites to perform funeral ceremonies and obsequies befall the descendants. Pigs were sacrificed for propitiation and thanksgiving regularly. The idea of family sacrifices and offerings of food and drink to the souls of the dead, the holms associated with the family crom, the meaning of ancestor-worship is, therefore, to clear the family of evil contagion, to observe family taboos. Among the Khasis, the Niam was an attempt to keep intact the ties of family. The idea of making such offerings was similar to the Japanese, when they offered the *pinda* or rice cakes to the souls of ancestors, i.e., to propitiate the souls of the dead to obtain their help thereby. With reference to the Niam of *Ai Bam* or offering to the spirits of the dead, Sinha has mentioned numerous instances of offerings made to the spirits of deceased ancestors by the Khasis in the Malay Archipelago.<sup>23</sup>

The ancient Shinto cult of Japan possesses many features which are common to the ancestor-worship of the Khasis. Funeral ceremonies, for instance. Both the Khasis laid out the dead in the house and exposed the corpse. And, the funeral ceremonies were accompanied by music and dancing. Hearn, in his book, tells us that in ancient times, the Japanese performed ceremonies at regular intervals at the tombs of their ancestors. Offerings of food and drink were the custom. Sinha remarked that veneration of the dead is a characteristic of tribal piety. He adds further: 'The Khasis, like the spirits of the dead, whose funeral ceremonies were performed, go to the house or garden of God to eat the fruit of betel nut trees; hence the expression *Ai Bam Kwai Ha Ing U Blei* (he who is eating betel nut in his house), the idea of supreme happiness to eat betel nut uninterruptedly.'<sup>24</sup>

The Khasi greatly respected female ancestors. The Niam was set up to the memory of the dead. The Niam was a woman who represents the clan *maw*

standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to ancestors on the mother's side. These memorial stones are of the same style and character as the cromlechs found in Western Europe, Northern Africa and Western Asia. They are special elements. According to Frazer most spirits propitiated are female. 'The powers of nature, even the terrible powers of sickness and death, are female. The members of the household are goddesses with whom the members of the clan *Thawlang* is also worshipped.'<sup>25</sup> Women act as priestesses as in the State of *Khyrim*.

*Ka Jawbei*, the primeval ancestress of the Khasis, is most worshipped by the Khasis. She is to them what 'the Mother' is to old Celtic and Teutonic genealogists, and the Khasis for *Ka Jawbei* has an interesting parallel in the goddess, *Brigit* the tribal mother of Brigantes. *Ka Jawbei*, she was canonised and became St. Brigit.

### Divination

The divinatory techniques of leading signs from the flight of birds, from the shells or from the viscera of cocks or other animals were employed by Khasi priests before every ritual or ceremony.

### Rituals and ceremonies

Rituals formed an important part of Khasi religion. A ritual may be considered in relation to four categories of activities.<sup>26</sup>

- (a) Ritual concerned with the life of man and his emotion.
- (b) Ritual concerned with physical phenomena.
- (c) Ritual concerned with economic activities.
- (d) Ritual concerned with social structure.

These four categories of rituals in Khasi religion are interrelated. Thus, a relationship between the feelings of man, animals and man was established within the social structure. Physical phenomena and economic activities are interwoven; psychological elements were involved in the occasion that gave rise to ritual. Religion and social

## II. NIAM. AN OVERVIEW

twined into one fabric; hence any of the  
l affect social structure.

Rituals played an important part in the re  
Khasis and had both social and super  
belief prevailed that any violation would  
wed by evil results, without any overt in  
of the community. The violation of tabo  
in the clan often rendered the offender  
believed to result in diseases or even deat  
may be inflicted by some supernatural pow  
social sanction was that of the organise  
community, acting as a whole or through  
in groups or individuals. The couple wa  
d to leave the village. Another insta  
cian who could use his power to bring ab  
it; or else, the culprit would have to und

The psychological, social and religious  
monies are best understood by realising t  
ism in the Khasi religion. Scholars have  
festations of intuition, imagination and  
as animism. But the message of the r  
culture is far deeper than what animism i  
of the *anima mundi* based on the phenom  
d by an immaterial soul. In tribal conscious  
a is pure faith, transcends materialism and  
mere attribution of a living soul to inani  
ively experiences the spiritual basis of all c  
sses of this experience do not encourage  
rel, dogma or schism. Metempsychosis (th  
e soul of a human being or animal into a n  
or different species) had taken a firm  
as was the case with other primitive tri  
of a benevolent Creator and ancestor-wors  
and various representatives in stone and  
ness of the tribal mind grasp the spiritua  
ive process. It looked beyond the mate  
possession and acquisition to continuity of  
a, to eternity.

The reading of omens is closely cor

the cycle of the individual and nature—the cycle of natural objects and the manifestation of nature from viz. the earthquakes, storms and floods. Mythology, the sun (*Ka Sngi*) was believed to be the moon (*U Bnai*) was a man. A halo round the sun was believed to foretell some pestilence or some comets were called *Khur dii duma* and portended deaths or some great personalities. Eclipses were due to the orbs being swallowed by a toad. An eclipse of the sun was considered inauspicious although a ceremony as such accompanied either hunting or

Certain ceremonies revolved round the important social signs in the life of the individual and religious aspect. The Khasi rituals connected with birth, puberty, marriage and death commonly reflected their social structure.

The birth of a baby was not an occasion for rejoicing when someone died. Having a baby at home was considered a matter of joy. Among the Khasis, marriage was a religious contract and not a social one. Omens were observed before the relevant rituals began. The ceremony of the pouring and mixing of liquor brought in by the bride and the groom. When the liquor flowed freely, it was considered a symbol of the union of the couple. Divorce was social in character and legal performances were strictly necessary.

Cremation rites were important. Funeral ceremonies had to be carefully performed so that the spirit of the deceased should not be obstructed by evil spirits on its journey to the afterlife and where in eternal comfort and happiness he would be joined with the spirits of predecessors. Death ceremonies were elaborate. This ritual began with the sacrifice of a pig and ended with an offering of the betel leaf and nut.

Those dying of accidents were given a special funeral. Deaths were believed to be caused by violation of sacred laws. In the case of deaths caused by small-pox, or deaths in families with sick members, the body was buried and after the epidemic subsided, exhumed and cremated. An important

mony observed in connection with death were the uncalcined bones and ashes of the deceased and their bestowal in the *Mawbah* or grave. The transference of bones from the foundation house of the ancestral mother is a rite with erections and observance of ancestors. *U Blei* was the God of burial and special sacrifice to him. The bodies of the deceased *syien* were embalmed in honey mixed with lime juice as preservative.

There was a slight variation in the funeral ceremonies.

Ceremonies associated with thanksgiving and offerings were performed simultaneously to God.

Fire had a significant role to play in the rituals.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be taken that the monism is prominent in the Khasi religion.

The belief was that God was formless. Huxley tells us that the Bambuti Pygmies of Africa have a similar belief in a kind of vital energy or life force as the root of their religion.<sup>27</sup> Their notions of God are permeated with this idea. The deities are the source and origin of the power. A parallel can be seen in this concept, the Polynesian belief in the god *Kerygura* and the Khasi concept of *U Blei*. If, as Norbeck says, the Americans, that religion is regarded as a force about which one feels strongly or deeply. The Khasi religion mirrors a fair image of the reality.

## REFERENCES

- Charles Winick, *Dictionary of Anthropology*, (London: A.M. Meerworth, Monograph on Khasis: The *And Hill Tribes of Assam*, (1919), Guide Book, 2.



3. P.R.T. Gurdon, *The Khasi* (1914), p. 107.
4. *Census of India* (1961), p. 86.
5. H. Bareh, *The History and culture of the Khasi People*, (1967),
6. Ka Niam-Ki-Khasi (1919, reprinted 1959, 1966) p. 1, 3-8.
7. Rabon Singh *Ka Kitab Ka Niam-Kheim Ki Khasi* (1911), p. 11.
8. H. Bareh op. cit., (1967) p. 378.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Hill India, (1972), Aug. Vol. I, p. 326.
11. B.J. Roy *Ka Kitab Shaphang Vivel U Blei*, (1900), p. 2.
12. Bareh, Pakyntein and six others, *Tribal Awakening*, (1965), p. 3.
13. Called by some *Ka Blei Hukum* or *Ka Blei Synshar*, Tho Lav perhaps after the Goddess *Sansar* of the Hindus.
14. A. MacCormack, *The Khasis, Ethnic groups of Mainland So Asia*, (1964), p. 123.
15. H. Bareh op. cit., p. 361.
16. A MacCormack op. cit., (1964), pp. 123-124.
17. J.H. Morris, *The History of our Foreign Mission*, (1930), p. 21.
18. S. Bannerjee "The Khasi festival of Pomblang," *Bulletin of the Anthropology*, (1956), p. 58.
19. MacCormack op. cit., (1964), p. 111.
20. Bareh op. cit., (1967), p. 359.
21. H. Bareh: *A short History of Khasi Literature*, (1962), p. 10.
22. P.R.T. Gurdon: *The Khasis*, (1914), p. 109.
23. James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (London), (1957), pp. 462-463.
24. K. Sinha, *Meghalaya; Triumph of the Tribal Genius*, (1970), p. 11.
25. James Frazer, op. cit., (1957), pp. 462-463.
26. Notes and Queries in Anthropology, (1951), p. 175.
27. Paul Schebesta *Die Bambuti Pygmaeon Vom Ituri*, (Religion, P (Brussels), (1941).
28. Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society*, (New York), (1961), p. 27

# 4

## Arrival of the Mission

The matri-centred Khasi society living in the stark rugged mountains considered itself timeless. The legend (mentioned in chap 2.) described families in heaven were sent down by God on earth. The Khasis maintained their religion for centuries despite the periphery of Hindus and Muslims of the plains to the whom they traded and who on their side. Indeed, the influence of neighbours was only at the fringes of the district where close to the plains, was minimal; culture presented the pale colours of a river mingled with retention of the core of Khasi culture transmitted by scholars to tarriance; but, the pride in their culture and implacable traditions were undoubtedly major factors in the traditions, beliefs and know-how were passed from one generation to another by word of mouth. The community had vested authority in a chosen class, *lyngdohs* and *syiems*, who were obvious in situating their authority and augmenting their distortions in the original beliefs over a long time. A priest could manipulate omens. The validity of their omens was questioned by intelligent minds

sought. But, these mute rumblings against never grew into any major force to introduce the system.

The static nature of early Khasi society—social, socio-religious, and economic. They were satisfied by a comparatively low level of material practices. Technological advance was almost non-existent. Centuries of stagnation brought about a certain amount of dissatisfaction and a consequent desire for change. Exotic influences began penetrating into the hills as a tiny particle of nacre brings a beautiful pearl.

The accidental change that came into the hills was perceptible and initially slow; later, it was more rapid. The British had come to India, and with their power, the British were assuming the role of rulers in the hills. In 1765, the adjoining Sylhet district had been brought under the tentacles of British power. Contact between the Khasis and the plainsmen of Sylhet was through the use of the lime quarries, but Khasis were regarded as 'troublesome marauders'.<sup>1</sup> A few incidents that occurred in the bordering areas led to the establishment of a British post at the foot of the hills (to hold the mountain people in check) and to the promulgation of a regulation in 1772 for the movement of arms into the hills. The first British expedition into the hills was the first occasion for the British to enter Khasi hills. The British then marched to the Assam plains from Sylhet. The British Governor-General's agent, marched through the Jaintia Hills area towards Assam. At the end of the British rule in the valley of Yandaboo in 1826, Assam was annexed to British India. An administrative need to connect Sylhet with Assam through the Khasi Hills. David Scott negotiated with the *Syiem* of Nongkhlaw for building a road through the hills. The attack on a British survey party at Nongkhlaw in 1829, resulting in heavy casualties, led to a long war between the hillmen and the British. It culminated in the British annexation of the hills in 1833 and establishment of a cantonment and a British station at Jorrapunjee.

Along with British rule came the evangelisation of the hills.

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

onaries from the British Isles. Mayhew of  
ors and the servants in India of the East  
een establishing the friendliest relations with  
onaries. However, when commerce was  
any took a prudent line. The London  
ly operating in other parts of the country  
e area and sent missionaries here. After  
ission closed its activities in the area in 18  
there was a split in the mission. The W  
odist Mission (later called the Welsh  
gn Mission) formed the new branch. T  
considered entering into the British colony  
by accident than by design, it came to the  
40. Rev. Tomlin, a man of means, and a  
from Malacca, happened to reach *Saitsohpe*  
a via Assam. After a stay of nine months  
elitimate was undoubtedly closer to the ori  
ght the place was ideal for propagation o  
spreading the Gospel and strongly recom  
ionary Society in London. Rev. Tomlin  
were by no small measure actuated by the  
in the fringes of the Khasi Hills, due to  
ali Christian convert from Calcutta, K  
eeded in converting some Khasis around  
most literate Khasis among the residents  
Rev. Tomlin rightly felt that the nuc  
iterate Khasis could be used for inter  
ainings and philosophy to the local populati  
Thus, the first concerted missionary act  
Khasi Hills in 1841, with the Welsh Calv  
ion establishing a branch at *Cherrapunjee*  
quarters of the district. The British mis  
come to these areas but for the extension  
h provided a protective umbrella.  
'Missionary' in this book is being consid  
on doing the traditional religious miss  
elytisation. It is not the intention here o  
his study, to go in detail into the motivation  
foreign missionaries to come to these distan  
ce it to say that there was ample zeal, a s

purpose, unflinching faith in the cause and the confidence that attended the work of these early missionaries. This chapter,<sup>1</sup> starting with the Christianisation of the various missionary denominations working in the region after the advent and brief stay of the first missionaries, including those locally born, and their subsequent work (Table on the next page).

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

Various denominations of Christian missionaries were commenced in the Khasi Hills. The first missionaries were missionary organisations from the West. Those born locally in the Khasi Hills are shown in Table 7:

### FOREIGN INSPIRED CHURCH GROUPS

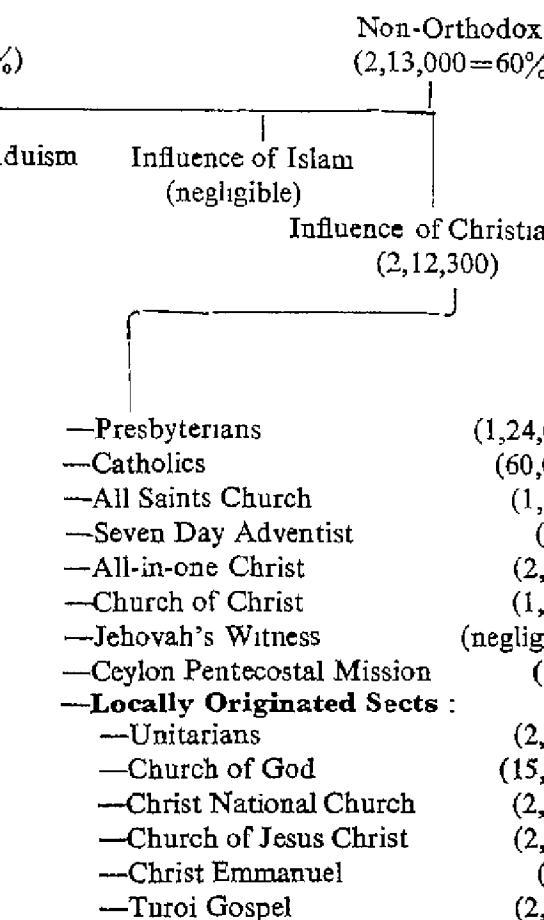
#### Baptists

The earliest Christian Mission to arrive in the Khasi Hills was the Serampore Baptist Mission<sup>2</sup> (Baptist Mission Society, London Baptist Society). Krishna Pal, a disciple of William Carey of the Serampore Mission, the first Protestant convert in India, baptised in 1800, was the first convert to arrive in the Khasi Hills. A convert thus became the first missionary. Pal's conversion may be taken as the start of directed religious and social change in the Khasi Hills of the advent of the missionary. Pal arrived in the Khasi Hills, on the outskirts of *Bhologanj*, near the Khasi Hills, in the district of Sylhet. Around 1800, seven Khasis at the immersion Baptist Mission in *Kushiara* (near Sylhet) in the presence of a large number of eight southern Khasi *Syiems*. The first converts were *U Dewan* and *U Anna*.<sup>4</sup> This was the first known conversion in the Khasi Hills. Baptist missionaries preached the Gospel near the monarchical trading centre of *Mawsmat* and the then powerful *Mawsmat Syiems*. After working for eight months, Pal went back to Calcutta, but later, William Carey continued to take in the Khasis, and with the help of

# MISSIONARY

(Bangladesh), took up the task of translating

## Religious Sects Among Khasis



relates to Khasis in Khasi Hills only.

x. population figures given in booklets of and  
ed from various missions.

ing to census, 1971, it is learnt that there  
2,48,000 Christians in Khasi Hills, but as t  
her ethnic groups also, such as Garos, etc  
strict, the figures given above, obtained  
at missions as in 1973, seem more or less co  
ect of Khasis.

into the Khasi language using the Bengali script. The Khasis then had no available script of their own, and the work proved unfruitful as the translators were ill-versed in the use of the complex Bengali script.

For almost ten years thereafter, the Gospel remained dormant in the Khasi Hills. In 1829, James Roe, a doctor from Scotland left his military job to give himself to God and to the preaching of Christianity. He was stationed at Gauhati. He influenced the then Agent to the Government, David Scott, to the G. Scott then preached in Gauhati and in the Khasi Hills. However, the first to stay was Alexander Lish, a young man sent by William Carey in 1831 to work among the Khasis at *Cherrapunjee*.

Lish opened three schools at *Sawrai*, *Umluh*, and *Umluh*. The number of pupils is reported to be 100. Lish is attributed the first written article on the Khasi language. Six years after this, there was no progress; the schools and Lish himself left. It was not until this, the lamp lit by Pal and Carey in the Khasi Hills, was extinguished. All funds for this early work in the mission were financed from abroad.

### Presbyterian

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission, or the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission, was the base for Christianity in the Khasi Hills.

After the Baptists abandoned the area following an unsuccessful start, Rev. Jacob Tomlin came in 1840, on a chance visit during a journey to the Khasi Hills. Here for nine months, he reported his findings to the London Missionary Society, a very orthodox body which had suffered a split, and the Welsh group formed its own mission—the Welsh Calvinistic Mission. Though it was low on financial resources, its zeal and commitment of its workers.

On the recommendation of Rev. Tomlin, the Khasi Mission sent its first missionaries Rev Thomas Joy

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

arrived at *Cherrapunjee* on 22 June. This day is truly a red letter day in the annals of the Khasi Hills. To Rev. Thomas Jones goes the credit for the birth of a modern Khasi society by tapping a latent potential in the society that for so long had remained dormant. This has been recorded by another writer, A. J. B. Jones, in *Jong Ka Balang* and has been corroborated by MacCormack in his writings. MacCormack mentions that the first Calvinistic Methodist Missionary came to the Khasi Hills in 1813, but there is a obvious confusion with Rev. Lish, who was the first missionary.<sup>5</sup> The arrival of these missionaries was followed by the British forces in *Cherrapunjee*. The British administration apparently felt that the primitive and 'wild' Khasis was through the missionaries alone could give.

Jones, a missionary with a clear sense of the suspicion and distrust of the local people, sought to win the support of earlier converts and other dedicated men. He turned to the hearts of men through demonstration. Treading a cautious approach, he began to write a script for the Khasi language. Being a Vedic scholar, he decided to adopt the Roman alphabet to the Khasi phonetic structure by reassigning the sounds to the Latin letters. This suited the language and the script was thus born by the labours of Jones. Two men—*U Duwan Rai* and *U Jingkha* earlier converts—were the language which, hitherto, was only spoken. In a simple and steady manner, new windows to the world in the world around were opened to the Khasis. This is a mark in the evolution of Khasi society. In the future, the like of which was never known. Jones is the father of Khasi literature. The *Cherrapunjee* is today the pan-Khasi dialect for literature. Jones started the first school at *Mawsmat* (Mawmat) in 1842, heralding the beginning of educational institutions in the Khasi Hills. Another school was started at *Mawmluh*. The Khasi teachers were *Lurshai*, and many children collected in Jones's house every week for meeting when some parts of the Bible



them. This was in addition to teaching at the school. The first Khasi book read in the school in 1842 was *Rhoda* (First Khasi Reader) followed by *Rhoda*. Jones also taught Khasis how to burn lime. At *Nongsawlia*, Jones first used the saw to cut and the axe had been in vogue for this purpose. Increasingly, the Joneses came to be accepted by the Khasis. Ropmay says that the Khasis, with much enthusiasm requesting his help. The slow but distinct success in converting the people must have been a great reward to Jones and must have prompted their zeal for work. The many and varied initial difficulties. For instance, when Jones toured the Khasi Hills in 1842, no Britishers had been there before. The people were so hostile and suspicious that their villages were even burnt down and deserted. The Joneses were joined by Rev. and Mrs. Dr Owen Richards in 1843. In the mission station at *Cherrapunjee*, 12 children were cared for and Mrs. Richards, posted at *Cherrapunjee* helped the Missionaries. However, Mrs Lewis encountered great opposition when she started to educate the women. She was quick to see that in the Khasi Hills, the position of women was far different from other places. *Ka Kmie Ka long Khlieh na la* (The mother is the ruler of the kitchen). The criticism against the missionaries was on grounds of religion more than on the woman was the keeper of religion, and in the hills, where was the need to take up work in the fields as asked.

Proselytisation made a slow start. The first conversions took place on 8 March 1846 were *U Amor* and *U Nong*. Rev. William Lewis recorded this as a great mission. *Ka Nabon* was the first Khasi woman to become a convert at the instance of the Political Agents and the fortunes upon her due to her conversion were graphically described by Jones.<sup>7</sup> (On her death her family members wanted to cremate her

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

el and a minor civil revolt that ensued, the first Khasi deacon was *K Tira Singh*. In *K Jorkha*, *Ka Phuh*, and *Ka Bir* (who could sh), who were earlier helping in the church. In 1850, the first Christian marriage in the district was celebrated when *Ka Phuh* was married to *U Lu*. The first conversions must have posed many problems and barriers. There was considerable opposition to missionary work. It became threatening. Every baptism was a antagonism and on more than one occasion, churches were surrounded by hostile crowds threatening. However, after the first few conversions, the task became easier. The ice had been broken and a good example was available, not only as examples but also as persons who would themselves carry on the work. By the end of 1849, conversions proceeded by 19 a year. The number rose to 19. As the work was making headway in the Khasi Hills, it was decided that the time was ripe for making rules for the Christian way of life. The basic rule was that every man should give a part of his earnings to the church to make it financially independent. A fund was set up for this purpose and accounts maintained regularly. *Amor* was the treasurer and *Amor* the Secretary. As missionary work made a gradual but definite progress in the Hills, certain superstitions that held a strong grip were slowly but surely shaken. For instance, the divination by breaking an egg could indicate whether a man was barren or the *Kur* (clan) would prosper or be killed and slowly died down. In challenging these superstitions, the local Khasi converts cooperated.

Further efforts were made to extend education. In 1851, a school was opened at *Shella*, a formerly Hinduised village owing to contact with the British, a fact evident from the image of the British flag set up there. In 1852, there were reports of an attempt to burn down the school by non-Christians. The incident was a setback when *Nimar*, a Christian convert,

missionaries turned down the demand for land by the clan, a fight ensued which was quelled by the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie. The activities of the Presbyterian Mission and Government to donate Rs 50 a month to the educational work.

In 1856, Rev. and Mrs Robert Pary arrived. In 1861, after 18 useful years of service, Rev. and Mrs William Lewis, who had worked in the Hills for a long time, left for home. Before the district headquarters to Shillong in 1861, the Mission extended its activities to this Upland Plateau at *Mawlai* and *Laitumkhrah*.

According to conservative Khasis, very much prevalent in the society, called *Suid rangbah* (a) *awria* sexual enjoyments (b) *Ka Kiad* (gambling). Shillong was described as a mission station.

In 1867, the work of the Mission reached a new stage. A Presbyterian meeting was held. At about the same time, Rs 50 earlier sanctioned by the Government was subject to the condition that the school be supervised by an Inspector, appointed by the Government for reporting the progress annually. *U Jarkha* was the first school established by the Mission; he was succeeded by *U Jarkha*, the first in Khasi Hills, with a printing press, the first in Khasi Hills, with a printing press at *Cherra* in 1869. With the arrival of Hughes, this work was accelerated. Hughes raised the press.

In *Shella*, a new couple Rev. and Mrs J. J. J. Sacred groves, *law kyntang* were then established by evil spirits, *ki ksuid ki khrel*. The missionaries built a house near the sacred groves, and, especially among the Christians. They showed how the placing of a certain fern was the arrival of evil spirits. But, the missionaries firstly there were no evil spirits; secondly, there were no evil spirits; secondly, there were no evil spirits. In this manner, the belief vanished.

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

demonstration, the minds of people were free from superstitions and irrational fears. Besides educating the people, the missionaries taught hygiene, and provided medical care. They also resulted in the expansion in the economy, agriculture, and industry and increasing monetisation. By now, the spread of Christianity among the tribes had considerable momentum as many important chiefs converted the faith. Among these were *Ka Jidom*, the ruler of *Sohra*, who embraced Christianity. He had three daughters at *Mawnai*. From there, the missionaries went to *Tongrwai*, *Mairang*, *Laitdom* and *Nongpoh*. *Sawphra*, the female ruler, *Ka Orman*, the ruler of *Mawden*, converted. The Sirdar of *Mawden*, by name *Ka Orman*, converted. Rev. Griffith Hughes succeeded in converting *Mawden*, village an entirely Christian one, and the surrounding area. After the advent of Christianity, a great improvement was noticeable in the moral fabric of the area. The occasional sufferings of Christians (mostly on Sundays under compulsion) were overcome by the loving and encouragement from the authorities. The Sirdar of *Mawden* issued a proclamation in consonance with the wishes of the missionaries, that nobody should molest a Christian. *Khawng*, a claimant to the position of *Syiem* of *Mawden*, became a convert, and lost the chance of becoming the *Syiem*. It is said, helped the missionaries in many ways. *Durabon*, hated Christians and despised missionaries. A convert, died talking of Christ. Then *Khawng* converted and also embraced the faith. Despite the missionaries being from the same denomination, their relations with the ruling British authorities were congenial. Rev. Thomas Jones, the Sirdar of *Mawden*, had a misunderstanding with one of the officers of the district, poor and sickly. He was a man of great trading with the plains people and exported goods to the plains. He managed to reach Calcutta with his goods and stayed at the Sirdar's house on 16th September 1849.<sup>9</sup> Sir *John*, another missionary who came to the district, intended to start a college in *Mawkhaw*, Shillong. His arrival caused despair and tested the will of the

missionary contracted a serious type of fever in the *Bhoi* area and died along with his family behind. Braving these difficulties, nevertheless, the early missionaries devoted themselves with admirable perseverance.

In 1879, Rev. Griffith opened a dispensary marking the beginning of medical work of the Mission. In building of churches, donations came from the Viceroy of India, the local people and others. Churches were built at *Nongsawlia*, *Shillong* of the Khasi Hills. During 1870-1880, the church grew three-fold. When *Kine Singh*, *sawphra* (*Nongkhlaw*) wanted to become a *syiem* (counsellors) and *bakhraws* (Noblemen) would lose his *Syiemship* and advised him to renounce his subjects. *Kine Singh* became a *condum* and brought a vote of ten to one for conversion. He became a deacon of the *Mairang* church and later *syiem* by the Britishers in recognition of his services in ruling his area.

During 1878-1888, the number of conversions of the Khasi Hills, increased from 203 to 1,250. More Welsh missionaries came to help the existing organisation. During this year, a theological school (now a college) was set up at *Cherrapunji* with *Mr. Griffith* as Principal, to train local Khasis in the Christian faith. He has given the following table of statistics:

	1861	1871
Churches and preaching places	16	33
Number of students in school	290	1250
Number of people who came to listen to preaching	500	900

*Solomon Blah* and *Dohori Ropmay* (1898) were the first Christian graduates of the Calcutta University. The first Khasi matriculate girl of the 'C. M. S. School' (und 1900) In 1906 a Training School

ished at *Jaiaw*. Institutions run by the Church and in a period of 60 years, the Church local leaders to preach the Gospel.

Joel Gatphoh had introduced in some churches at *Kham* the unique method of collecting church by way of contribution of a hand during morning and evening; this was popularised in the hills at the end of every month or so and Christians would pay handsome amounts for the same, considered to be a gift of God. The practice has been adopted by other Christian sects. In 1901, 9% of the Khasis were Christian, nearly all the remainder orthodox Khasis. In the census of 1911, out of the population of 13 lakhs, 10% or 10% were Christians. In 1913, Rongmei was converted and his State housed a large number of Christians. With the increase in Christians, a change came about in the attitude of the Khasis, who were earlier shy of going out of the Khasi hills. Many Khasis joined the labour corps and went to France during World War I (1914-1918). There was an epidemic of influenza in the Khasi Hills, which caused the death of many persons, causing a set-back to the Christianisation of the hills. The Mission had shifted its headquarters to Shillong. It established a hospital at *Jaiaw* and a grant was received from the Government in Shillong. It established a school at *Jaiaw* and a grant was received from William Morris. Till date, this is one of the best schools in the entire north-eastern region of India. Besides the school, the Mission had also set up dispensaries at various places.

An important contribution of the Welsh Mission to the Khasi culture was the introduction of Western music. The introduction of Western music and setting music to the rhythm of the Khasi Christian hymns translated from Welsh and set to the Khasi pattern, were introduced in all the churches. The Khasis sang and chorus with ease during church services. Men and children alike, even amidst big gatherings, were able to sing because of the habits of going to church. The music imparted there. On this music as the Khasi culture greatly enriched itself over the years.

prior to 1920, majority of persons in the Goal, Shillong, were non-tribals. But due to the missionaries, increase in the figures of tribals became noticeable. Many local Khasis made handsome gains because of the missionaries. Grants were received from the Government. There were 73 female literates in the Khasi Hills in the age-group of five and above. The Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University was impressed by the number of Khasi graduates and in 1933, Lord Wellington had been similarly struck by this figure—where there were more than 100, including about 20 women. By 1925, membership of the Protestant church in the Goal was 100 and in 1928, in the *Mawphlang* church was 150. It was said that Rev. Amirkha (a Pastor) had to supervise 15 Presbyterian churches. The Shillong Association estimated the number of believers as 45,000. The remaining 100,000 were said to be non-Christian and, with the exception of a few, were illiterate.

In 1902, a church magazine '*Nongialam Kristian*' was started. It ceased publication in 1910. A new magazine '*Ka Pateng Kristan*' was started in 1911. By this time, Christian Khasi intellectuals were educated and trained in the procedures of the working of politics and other specialised professions. For instance, When partial autonomy was granted in 1936, three candidates elected to the Legislative Council from the Khasi Hills were Christians. In 1937, the first Khasi to pass M.B. Examination was (Miss) Claribell Reade the first lady doctor in the Khasi Hills. There were 150 Presbyterian churches.

In 1941, the Presbyterian Mission celebrated its 100th anniversary in the Khasi Hills. The parent body in Wales and the Khasi Hills Mission should be self-sufficient by 1941. This was possible thanks to an excellent organisation set up.

This Mission, in collaboration with other churches, and under the auspices of the Indian Christian Council (then known as the Assam Christian Council) set up the Union Christian College at Barapeta. In 1953 Rev Bransley Pugh a local mission

## VAL OF THE MISSIONARY

Principal of the college and Ivon Simon, a missionary, left his job to be a teacher in the college. The missionaries now provided theological training to local Khasis so that they could assist in evangelical work themselves. A highly developed administrative structure was also built up for the governance of the Assembly at the apex and synods at the district level, one for Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills. Presbyteries, sub-districts and churches. After baptism, administration of other religious necessities by frequent meetings under him. The day-to-day management of the church including conducting of regular services, Sunday schools, was left to Elders of each church who had been trained by the missionaries. Communion. The church committee meetings were held once a year including the district and national assemblies. Pastors were fulltime employees and were paid remuneration for their work; the lay members worked in an honorary manner. Details of church accounts, as also figures regarding the number of believers according to age-groups, were maintained. Elections were held to various committees annually. This organisational structure encouraged leadership among the Khasis. Therefore, it was possible for the missionaries to take over the entire work of the church. When the Welsh missionaries left after Independence, they added that persons trained by the missionaries were efficient in their work in Government of India. With the Constitution of India coming into effect, the declaration of the nation as a secular state, the policy towards the foreign missionaries changed. Preaching by foreign missionaries on the streets and in public places by them was discouraged. A chain reaction of restriction of foreign aid coming to the missionaries, the missionaries could come to India to do evangelistic work but only to continue the work done by the missionaries. The Presbyterian church in Assam was already on its own feet. Jones observed that the Government ordered that the Welsh missionaries continue publishing of school text books and



books of the Mission were handed over to the Synod for the purpose of removing parts connected with Christian teachings from the books.<sup>12</sup> With the departure of the Welsh missionaries from the scene, the Mission can be said to have been 'nationalised' now and is manned entirely by local people. The Mission is now called 'Khasi and Jaintia Presbyterian Mission'.

The Welsh Mission worked not only for the Christianisation but also undertook humanitarian work. During 1964 and 1965, when a huge number of refugees poured into the Khasi Hills from nearby East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), this Mission along with others, did excellent work.

Starting with a meagre number of three converts at the end of three years of work in the Khasi Hills in 1845, the work of the Mission has grown by leaps and bounds and the position in the recent past is as follows :

Presbyterian Mission—position as on 31.12.72 in Khasi Hills

Presbyteries	8
Sub-district	70
Pastors	62
Churches	410
Members	1,23,693 of whom 43,963 were women members who had been administered holy communion.
Hospital	1
High Schools	6
Middle English Schools	29
Primary Schools	275 with 14,136 students.
Teachers Training Centres	1
Theological College	1
College	1
Printing Press	1 (in Shillong).

The Mission undertakes work in various fields such as training of rural leaders, voluntary organisations for rural upliftment, etc. From the churches alone, about a sum of Rs 3,00,000 per year is collected as contributions. This is in addition to considerably larger sums collected for educational purposes, hospitals, etc.

The phenomenal growth of the Mission could be attributed

## VAL OF THE MISSIONARY

the loving service rendered by the initial missionaries, partly to the glamour of official recognition and partly to the converts. At present, the rate of expansion is due to the intensification of the *Seng Khasi* movement (discussed in Chap. 5) which seeks to revive the old traditions, the lack of funds, the humanitarian work of the missionaries, the emphasis than the evangelical work and the lack of non-availability of highly devoted missionaries to the church. Certainly, the work of the Welsh missionaries was a single major cause for the modernisation of the area.

### Indian Catholics

The Roman Catholic sect as the second largest Christian sects in the Khasi Hills and the Jaintia Hills. Starting work first at *Laitkynsew* in 1890, the Roman Catholic Mission has spread to various parts of the Khasi Hills.<sup>13</sup> A number of educational institutions, colleges, etc. have been established. While some Catholic orders have been engaged in educational and social welfare activities, others have remained with the Catholic Church. The missionaries mention that the Catholic missionaries are doing the *Uraons* of *Chainpur* of Chotanagpur for six years for any real progress in conversion. The case was similar in the Khasi Hills. The missionaries of the deficiency of the previous missionaries who confined themselves to purely evangelical work, without attending to the moral needs of the inhabitants. Thus, even today, the Catholics first approach the people with medical care, etc., endear themselves to the people and then the process of conversion to start gradually. The arrival of the Catholics almost 50 years ago in the area, may be partially attributed to the policy of the British rulers not to allow other missionaries to work in the same area and due to the lack of contact with the Catholic Missions. It is only after the Catholic missionaries came to Gauhati in 1915. When attempts were made to go to Tura, the missionaries were killed on their way in the area.

achal Pradesh. The Mission at Gauhati was closed in 1857 due to acute shortage of funds. It was reopened in 1872 and remained at Gauhati till 1890. During this period, priests from Shillong visited Gauhati. The first band of four missionaries, all belonging to the Society of Divine Saviours, arrived on 27-2-1890. With the arrival of this band, real mission work in this area began. They started from Cherrapunjee, and not getting a foothold there, they sought the existence of the Presbyterian Missions at Jorhat, and established themselves at a place called Jorhat. Though Shillong was the centre of the mission, Jorhat became more important as a place for the people. It was there that the Salvatorians started their printing press.

At the outbreak of the first World War in 1914, the Salvatorians were considered enemy aliens and were interned in India on 9, July 1915 for the internment of enemy aliens. Before their departure, the Salvatorians had left a precious legacy to the people. In the course of their short stay in Assam, they had administered over 5,000 baptisms. In the Shillong Parish, there were 813 Catholics of Indian origin and 80 Catechumens. These early missionaries laid the foundation of the Catholic Church in Assam, founded parishes and their plan has stood the test of time. During 1915-1922, Assam was placed under the administration of Bengal who were short of personnel. Of these, Rev. Fr. Le Ferme, a French missionary, died at Shillong on 1915 while on a missionary tour in the Bhoi area where he contracted a disease.

The earliest batch of missionaries belonging to the Salesians of Don Bosco to come to Assam consisted of two from France and Alsace, five from Spain, who sailed from Marseilles, in France, in 1921 and arrived in Shillong on 1921 after a short stay in Bombay. The Jesuit Fr. ... at that time gave them a warm welcome. The Christian Brothers had established the ... for boys (1916) the Loretto Sisters had

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

the girls (1905), the sisters of our Lady of  
phanage for the Khasi girls and a Girl's S  
scholars—all of them in Shillong. The M  
Khasi Hills, besides Shillong, were: *Wynsew*. In the following year, the Sale  
ed in Shillong (1923). The publication  
i Catechism was done and the monthly  
'*Ka Ing Kristan*' was also revised.

Shillong, the capital of Assam and of the  
entre of the activities of the Catholic Ch  
is received the Catholic faith before all  
of north-east India. In Shillong, the  
Mary (1962) and Christ King College (1  
0) were established for training the prie  
the Salesian Novitiate and House of Stud  
al training to local people. The Sister  
e Missions and other religious orders for v  
iates and Houses of Formation also in Sh  
he Nazareth Hospital, a voluntary org  
y by local people, was founded in Shillo  
d after by the sisters of Christ Jesuits. I  
arity by caring for the sick and the disa  
on of caste, religion or race. The ho  
le dispensary units that visit rural are  
*i, Smit*, etc. When Government opens a  
where Catholics worked earlier, these mi  
shift their mobile dispensary to another vi  
ent work in caring for the Bangladesh  
ri area during 1971. The hospital rece  
Government and equipment, medicines and  
us voluntary agencies in Poland, Eng  
, Spain and India. Private donations  
and Spain. The local community in S  
to raise funds.

The Catholic missionaries have establish  
ing School in the St. Mary's College i  
ch also runs many High Schools, Prin  
sh Schools, and the Don Bosco School, a  
stitution in north-east India where the K  
afismanship. Khasi boys and girls are

sion to the order. There are 47 Khasi sisters. Khasi boys and young men are also under the care of the Missionaries and religious Houses of Formation. The first Khasi priest was Fr. Elias Hopewell, SDB, who was ordained as a priest in 1941. Catholic missionaries have lived and stayed in interior places. A mission was established in 1971 at *Mawhati* in the *Bhoi* area. A primary school and a dispensary are being run. In the Khasi Hills the Mission has 5 churches with resident priests. A regular chapel is run in each parish and also a large number of small chapels in local huts, in various interior villages. Lay school teachers carry on the work in the absence of the priest of the parish visits his jurisdiction to carry out sacraments and other religious work. The Catholics try to reach the hearts of the people by humanitarian work, providing medical care, education, etc. They try to understand the many rural ways of life such as crafts, agriculture, etc.; and thus are able to reach to the people with modern knowledge. They are more tolerant and understanding than earlier Presbyterians. They have more financial funds also. The Mission is well-organized. Conversions from Protestants to the Catholics are increasing. A few and Catholic priests usually go to areas where conversions have not been fully established. The success of the Catholic nature, selfless work, easy accessibility and adaptability to local conditions displayed by the missionaries. Conversions to this faith has been quite high. The Welsh Presbyterians had kept more to the traditional ways, probably because they had their families with them. Church officials were socially more close. But when the missionaries started mixing closely with the people, etc., the Presbyterians also changed their attitude. The excellent education offered in Catholic schools, where whose children attend these, come in contact with the Catholic priests. Today, the Mission has a few foreigners. Despite their long service, the Mission is an Indian priest. Kerala missionaries form a large portion of the priests and sisters. It is the stability of these persons is lesser than that

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

mpression may also be due to the inherent  
reigner.

he present position of the Catholic mission  
is briefly indicated below:

seminaries and Novitiates—for priests  
for nuns

teachers' Training School

Hospitals

homeopathic hospital

home for lepers

colleges

high schools

chapels with priests, most of whom administer  
medicines also

chapels in villages

number of followers

### **Saints' Church**

he All Saints' Church, an old missionary  
he Anglican Church or Church of Eng-  
land by Henry VIII) commenced its work in  
y in order to minister to the spiritual needs  
community.<sup>16</sup> A notice issued in 1839 to Major  
Agent to the Governor General for the North  
contains the earliest reference to the eccles-  
in Assam, in which directions were given  
e of baptisms and marriages by public  
velve years the area had been ruled by  
pany. The first clergyman from this church  
i Hills was Rev. A. Garstin, Chaplain of  
herrapunjee in 1841.

n 1866, Bishop Cotton of Calcutta became  
he efforts of Welsh Presbyterian Missions  
stianise the *Kossyahs* (Kasi). Shillong had  
istrict headquarters and the Chaplain from  
links with Shillong, looked after the ne-  
69, when Shillong had no roads, and car-  
drawn by animals over bridle paths, the  
batt, Archdeacon of Calcutta paid a visit  
ati In that year the local British resid-

ing that a church should be erected in Shillong. The Governor suggested that the residents should contribute money. This became a subject of correspondence between the Government of Bengal and the Bishop of Calcutta, during his first visit to Shillong. He selected the site for the church and the present site is at the same location.

Shillong was growing in importance and became a new province of Assam in 1874. The need for a church was therefore keenly felt. Local contributions and subscriptions came from all over the district. In 1874 an appeal was made to the Government. The new church was opened around the afternoon service on the Trinity Sunday in 1875. Many Christians and other Khasis. The church was dedicated to the Holy Trinity in 1877. It is obvious that the British religious order of the ruling class at that time received a great deal of support from the government. The Secretary of State sent some books to the incumbent of Rev. S. B. Taylor, considered it his duty to impart education to children. Later, a school was also started in Shillong. After that a new church was built in Shillong and it was completed with funds received from the Secretary of State, the Government of India and the Diocesan Earthquake Fund. The church is the centre of Shillong, next to the seat of government. Funds were raised for the church by the British and the Khasis among whom was Lady Hammond, Governor of the Province.

The church started originally for the purpose of meeting the spiritual needs of the Britishers and its initial work was among the Europeans. Its evangelical work among the Khasis was on a limited scale. The unwritten gentleman's agreement was that while this church would cater to the needs of the Britishers, the Presbyterians would work among the local Khasis. A no-objection certificate was necessary for the church to be admitted to the All Saints Mission for admission to the All Saints Mission. The chaplains were Europeans but since India was taken over the work. The church has a membership of 1000 persons in the district.

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

### nth Day Adventists

This denomination, initiated in Washington, D.C., has an office in Poona in the state of Maharashtra. Pastor Burgis who came here 37 years ago, observed Sunday as the sabbath day. Pastor Burgis initiated such as buying the building and began evangelisation. After his departure, when the work was done, Pastor Ashlock arrived and stayed for some time. The earlier strength of believers which was estimated to be nearly 500. Of these, most were from other sects of Christianity; only a few were orthodox Khasis. There are nearly 15 churches in the area.

This movement faced no opposition from the authorities. Inquiries reveal that no force or deceit was used in its propagation. That explains why the majority of converts are from other sects; for, they could argue, they were already Christians. Meetings were held at a bungalow in the area. In the absence of adequate records, it is difficult to trace the initial and later foreign aid. But since the Indian office of this Mission has been operating for some time, no grants are taken from Government. Individual donations have been accepted. The church is organised annually or bi-annually. Taxes, tithes and contributions supplement the Church funds. The movement has slackened mainly due to the paucity of funds. Remuneration is not attractive enough; competitive times generate individualistic forces. Some are in business, are office-going or teachers; they have no time nor the means to preach. This section is located at Jowai, in the adjoining Jaintia Hills. Here the converts are trained in poultry, dairy or carpentry. For every hour of 25 naya paise an hour is paid. They take pride in the dignity of labour and preaches in their own homes. The general opinion voiced was that in the past management was strict and hence, more efficient. A Khasi gardener at the church building remarked that the maintenance of the garden was better when the American missionaries were in charge.



### **All-in-one Christ**

This sect has no parent body abroad. In India the parent body is in West Bengal in Dewagram Nadia. It was started in 1947 by Brother H.R. Sanyal. In the Khasi Hills, a branch was started in 1955 by Brother Biswas. The management of this denomination is entirely in the hands of the Khasis. The main sphere is proselytisation and no schools are maintained. There is neither encouragement nor interference from Government. The Apostles visit various places in the Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills. The initial strength was about 100 and it has grown to about 1,000 in about 37 villages.

### **Church of Christ**

The parent body of this sect is in America and Canada, Singapore and in India. In the Khasi Hills it was started in 1940 at *Nonglum* by *Satiraja Syiem* of Nongstien. Some Presbyterians coming away from that sect started this church. There was a split in the organisation, and Rev. B. Syiem started another group. Originally, funds and collections came from abroad and were supplemented by weekly collections from church congregations, while the parent body is supported by thirteen churches, with about 1,500 believers; a dispensary and two schools. The splinter body has about 100 followers at *Mawlai Phudmawri*.

The churches are non-denominational and are based on the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles as found in the New Testament. There are Canadian missionaries working under the new branch of this sect whereas the parent organisation is run entirely by Khasis.

### **Jehovah's Witness**

An organisation founded very recently, this has about 100 followers. The sect is self-supporting and has no foreign train speakers.

### **Ceylon Pentecostal Mission**

The parent body of this sect in India is in Madras and is in Ceylon. In the Khasi Hills it was started in 1955. It is entirely self-supporting. The believers at present are about 100.

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

t 100. The maxims are (1). 'They live by fa  
(2). 'Without faith, no man can please God'.  
Faith homes are managed by this denom  
towns and villages with the help of co  
workers. There is also one church at Ja  
There are thus nine known Christian sects  
ed elsewhere in the world or in India, that  
i Hills. Of these, the Baptists have alread  
s of coverage of area and population, the  
n Mission stands out as the biggest, the  
ion plays the most important role in the  
n and general humanitarian service. Mo  
are small. Confined to limited areas and  
le, they are yet to make any significant im  
as a whole.

## LOCALLY BORN CHRISTIAN SECTS

### arians

The Unitarian movement in the Khasi  
y born. It is unique as the only group o  
e of Southeast Asia, though the moveme  
inent in America. In the Khasi Hill  
pendently and has essentially an Unit  
s and manner of worship are universal  
arian missionaries came from abroad  
ment here and acted as bridge-builder  
ons in the world. The early believers  
ved the hazards of isolation, poverty and  
born at *Cherrapunjee* on 15 June 1865, th  
r Singh was self-educated. Through  
gn missionaries, he had been converted  
nistic Church in early youth. Later, he b  
rigid and sectarian character of the Calv  
ately, he broke away from the Church a  
ous movement, based on principles of u  
more egalitarian and tolerant outlook an  
sophies of various religions, thus synthe  
theistic ideas of the Khasi people. He ai  
ove and worship of the one true God

of all men. The movement began around the establishment of a church at *Jowai* (Jaintia) and the opening of schools. Inspired by the bold statement of the Unitarian, Jabes Sunderland, visited the Khasi Hills in 1857. In a span of 12 years, the strength of the movement grew to about 150 and today there are 19 Uniting churches. About 2,000 believers in the Khasi Hills are active. The work undertaken by the Youth and Women's Societies is within the framework of the Union in the spiritual and vocational education.

Margaret Barr, a foreign Unitary missionary, came to the Hills in 1936. She began her work in Shillong and was later shifted to *Kharang* village, 16 miles South of Shillong. The rural centre has a maternity hospital and a dispensary. After her death in 1973, the curtain closed on a life of devoted, selfless life. It will thus be seen that the movement was started by a Khasi, it attracted the attention of foreign missionaries also.

In 1923, when *Majom Kissor Singh*, the founder of the movement, had less than 500 souls in ten churches; it has today over 2,000 members.

### Church of God

This sect is the most important among the Unitarian sects.<sup>17</sup> It was started in Khasi Hills by Nichols-Roy, an influential person from Shillong who studied in Calcutta where he came under the influence of Unitarian missionaries. He was married to an American woman. Rev. Nichols-Roy was a forceful and popular preacher. Along with him many admirers and supporters. Nichols-Roy of Cherrapunjee and Nichols-Roy were instrumental in spreading the Gospel. They were helped by Unitarian missionaries, Misses Nichols and McCrie. They made frequent times on lecture-tours. Rev. Nichols-Roy was at the beginning that the believers pay tithes. The church has been self-supporting throughout. It has about 15,000 believers in 223 churches. Primary schools are run in 14 places. The movement is very popular, covers 240 villages.

## AL OF THE MISSIONARY

### st National Church

This denomination has no parent body abroad. In the Khasi Hills, it was started in 1921 by Rev. R. J. S. It has been self-supporting from the very beginning, the number of believers was about 2,000.

Work is undertaken in religious and humanitarian spheres. The organisation has churches in seven parishes. Primary schools are run from the church collections.

### rch of Jesus Christ

The sect was started in Shillong in 1932; and the headquarters are at *Jaiaw* Church Road. At present, the number of believers is estimated at 1,000. There are churches. But finance is a handicap as even to be raised to meet all the needs the sect has to depend especially on the social side.

Work has been undertaken in the spheres of humanitarianism. In the sphere of missionary work, starting of churches, printing and distribution of literature, books, magazines, booklets and tracts have been undertaken. Two Bible correspondence courses have been conducted in the Khasi language. In the sphere of social work, care of the poor and deserving cases; provision of hospitalisation, distribution of cloth is undertaken. Farmers are helped with seeds and also very much in the lower primary school, under the management of the church, is run at *Unitham*. Land, building and other expenses of the school which is owned by the organisation have been no interference from the Government.

### st Emmanuel

*Kyrhai Warjri* founded this sect in the Khasi Hills. It has no parent body abroad. This denomination has not grown much and the progress is slow. The number of believers in the beginning, has now risen to about 1,000. The sectant claimed that the number of believers was 1,000. It is said that once the followers were led to the hills of the jungle to wait for the second coming of Christ. When food was over, they were even made to

on, greatly disappointed, the followers  
es.

This sect undertakes only proselytising  
chies run are at *Malki*, *Mawlai* and *Laitlym*.

### **Turoi Gospel**

The *Turoi Gospel* was formed about 1941,  
in the Church of God. It is claimed that  
based upon spiritual fellowship, rather  
ng.

The number of believers is around 2,000  
regations or local churches. Pastors look  
evangelists preach the Gospel of the Sa  
which the ministerial Assembly guides the  
ols aided by local people and by the Gov  
e sect at *Thanqshalsi* and *Umpyrdeng*. T  
ngthening year by year.

## NON-CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

### **Vaishnava Sect**

No active efforts were made to preach the  
hnavas in the Khasi Hills. The mea  
ad imperceptibly among the Khasis here,  
Christianity, was due to two factors :

(i) The Khasi traders met some Vaishnavi  
res in the plains.

(ii) Some Jatra parties (folk-theatre) co  
hnavites visited the border villages in the  
ent, not much is known of this sect; its i  
ct. The only vestige remaining is in some  
*shnu* sung by the Khasis of *War* area, prom  
uised village of *Shella*

### **Bramo Saznaj**

This sect has been propagated in the I  
ry, but its influence was very restricted  
per of Bramo believers (around 25) i  
ment will become extinct. The main tenet  
theism, belief that God is formless, equ  
were acceptable to the Khasis. The Brab

## VAL OF THE MISSIONARY

stiff opposition from two quarters—Christian Khasis. But the principal tenets, the cause and service rendered along with preaching medicine, appealed to them.

The Brahmo Samaj has three branches. 1. *Sadharan* Brahmo Samaj. 2. *Naba* Brahmo Samaj. 3. *Naba* Brahmo Samaj. Little is known about the first branch. The second branch while Benode Behari Roy, and his wife, preached beliefs of the third branch. It is said that the differences in the beliefs of the three branches were minor. Both the missionaries, who were British, worked in *Cherrapunjee*; they helped people with money, medicine and clothes. During the movement nearly 50 years ago, there were nearly 1000 members and of these, the followers of *Sadharan* Brahmo Samaj were only about 50. Roy died in 1930 and his wife died later. Today all that remains of this sect in the Brahmo Khasis, tablets commemorating the establishment of the two missionaries and a prayer book. A Brahmo informant whose father, a Britisher, came to Shella in 1888, said that one Rohini continued the movement after the death of Benode Behari Roy. It failed due to paucity of funds.

Another 60-year-old Brahmo Khasi informant, who lives in Shillong, some Unitarians also helped the movement with finances and ideas. He said that only the basic Brahmo principles, and that among the Khasis, the dances were popular. Most Brahmo Khasis followed the Khasi pattern of bestowing property on their children. There was no restriction on Brahmo Khasis to perform Khasi dances, music and archery, and to speak Khasi language. They worked for the social uplift of the Khasi sect.

## Ramakrishna Mission

Swami Lokeshwarananda writes that around 1920, the hey-day of the non-cooperation movement, a young man, an admirer of Ramakrishna and a devotee of the Ramakrishna Mission, began visiting the local branch of the

son whose ideal of serving mankind appealed to him, drew from politics, became a monk and changed the name of his name. While undergoing training at the school of Dacca, he learnt that many Khasis were on sending their children to new schools. He was free from the influence of any religious propaganda. He sent his children attending existing schools in the Hills. The schools in the State were managed by the Christians. The books used were all books of Christians. In September 1924, the monk, arrived, penniless, in the Khasi Hills—the place, people and their culture. He identified himself completely with them, shared their food, spoke their language, understood their hopes and aspirations and was soon accepted by them. The monk found that in the Hills, few Khasis were Brahmos and the others were Christians. The former had started a school but it had closed. Encouraging the villagers to decide what they wanted, he helped them to start a school. While he was working for them, he made it plain that he was not a missionary (though missionaries who helped liberally) nor expected from him. The poor Khasis of the Hills, mostly on primitive agriculture, yet they were not without the expense. A night school started for them with great success. This was followed by a day school attended by Hindu and Christian children. In the only single house in *Shella*, he was pained to see how far from Christianity often took place because of poverty and ignorant. The Monk's own motive was not to convert but if a person wanted to accept initiation, he would help. He cautioned the Khasis against separatism as a tribe; but he also stressed that the Khasis should assimilate but in assimilating what was good, they should keep their own and also in integration. After a school at *Shella* was raised to the Middle English School, the *Durbar* (assembly) of the *Shella* confederates was 500. Gradually a net-work of schools spread in the hills. When a school was to be started, the Christians in a body opposed the idea and the Khasis were either luke warm in their enthusiasm or

## VAL OF THE MISSIONARY

Orthodox Khasi donated land. Opposition also overcome. A committee of the leading men of all religions was formed to take down the school. Another monk also offered help. A school was established in Shillong too. Later on, this school became a significant institution embracing a wide range of work. The headquarters of work in the Khasi Hills were established by these two monks laid the foundation in 1910 of the Rama Krishna Mission. These two monks, by their tolerance of the Khasis in their own religion and their friendly attitude, dispelled suspicion and antagonism to Christianity.

In the year 1959, Tarani Purkayastha, Dohbarpunji, who had devoted his entire life to the service of the Khasis, established a school there, joined hands with the Government, the work spread to *Shella, Cherra, Shillong*. Details are given below:

Name of village	Year of starting	
	Dispensary	
Shella	—	1924
Cherra	—	1931
		School
Shillong	1952	1933
Dohbarpunji	1940 small homeopath dispensary	1933

This mission is given credit by many Khasis, for promoting a sense of nationalism among the Khasis and also a secular outlook like treating everyone alike.

The functions of this Mission are on an 'All India' basis. The scriptures are read from the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, the Zend-Avesta, the Granth-Sahib and other religious books. Many distinguished Khasi leaders, some of the founders of the Ramakrishna Mission. During its long history in the Khasi Hills, it has rendered yeomen services, though of a high quality, are low cost. Its social service especially in the *Cherra*



rs and dearth of adequate finances are most Khasis speak very highly of this in have actually been initiated, i.e. taken at strength of devotees runs into a thousand to conclude, the alien influence affecting it can be divided into two major groups: embracing Christianity and the other, in uism. The third minor group tries to religious thought of ancient days, and of ess to add that the reasons for accepting fect on a hitherto undisturbed Khasi soc eresting study.

## REFERENCES

- is on record that Lindsay, the Resident Comadia Company at Sylhet in 1778, amassed a great many quarries and cowries collected as land revenue from the population.
- A. Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, p. 159.
- John Hughes Morris, *The History of our Foreign Missions*, p. 159.
- Anna MacCormack, *The Khasis: Ethnic Groups of India* (1964), p. 110.
- L. Ropmay, *Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in Khasi*, p. 20.
- Angel Jones, *Ka History Jong Ka Balang*, (1966), pp. 20, 23.
- H. Morris, op. cit., p. 28.
- L. Jones, op. cit., (1966), pp. 21-22.
- L. Jones, op. cit., (1966), p. 72.
- Imperial Gazetteer of India.
- L. Jones, op. cit., (1966) p. 281.
- L. Bareh, op. cit., (1967), p. 380—also confirmed by Mahay, 'Impact of Christianity on the Oraons of the Jharkhand: an analysis of the Cultural Process.' *Anthropologist* (Oct. 1968 Vol. 70. No. 5), p. 926.
- This and further details are from a circular letter of the Bishop of Shillong on 31. 1. 1972, on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Salesians in Shillong.
- This data is compiled from the old Record Book and the Annual Report made by the Rev. S.B. Taylor, Chaplain of the Salesians in Shillong.

## RIVAL OF THE MISSIONARY

bringing the information upto the year 1950 and partially from information gathered from a 70 year old informant, Winifred Ghatge. The Church of God, thus called from a phrase in the Bible, simultaneously all over the world---in America, Europe and India. Swami Lokeshwarananda, 'An Unknown young Man's Pioneer in the Hills of Assam,—Prabudh Bharati (Delhi, Calcutta, Oct. p. 419).

# 5

## Impact of the Missionary on Khasi Society

The Khasi Hills felt the gentle breezes of the change with the arrival of the Britishers and missionaries in the early nineteenth century. The first Anglo-Khasi contact followed the annexation of the adjoining Sylhet district by the East India Company in 1765 as a consequence of the grant of Diwani of Bengal. The initial uneasiness about the relations between the natives and the aliens later took a new turn. As early as 1807, the imposition of the knowledge of the tribals for efficient administration was first realised. The Court of Directors of the East India Company took a formal decision to this effect. In the plains areas of the country, the British rule was more comprehensive and touched more aspects of administration and day-to-day life. In the Khasi Hills, however, from its full annexation in 1833 to its departure in 1947, the British rulers administered the area with a minimum presence and interference respecting the tribal customs leaving the *Syiems* to exercise their authority in local matters as before. The latter existed almost like, but on a far lesser scale and level than the rulers of the princely states in the country.

The Khasi society, strong, close-knit and integrated, was bound to be affected by the presence of an alien ruler, the influence of his culture and the need to adjust to his way

ods. Besides, there were exotic influences from the Christian missionaries. A society man changed because of the direct factors but also because of the resistance and sometimes opposition encountered by the forces. Thus, inevitably, contact with a new religion involved the Khasi individuals; it also affected the Khasi cultural dynamics and integration. The earlier cultural setting changed and after the initial cultural shock, by the time of change was accelerated. At one stage, the process was enculturation. Illustration 12 and its consequences.

A legitimate question can be posed now: would such changes have occurred in Khasi Hills even without the missionaries, by the normal evolutionary process of communications and spread of technology? The answer is and should be an emphatic 'no'. The British rulers were only interested in change that was imperative to administrative needs. The changes (even economic ones) are not visible in the country ruled by the British, without a missionary influence. Tribal areas in Orissa.

Marginal affects on the society caused by the opening up of communications cannot be denied. Changes consequent on location of the capital at Shillong in Khasi Hills, in 1874, such as the influx of people in large numbers leading to more and varied contacts, the upsurge in economy and improvement in the aspects of trade, greater horizontal and vertical communication, better communications resulting in the diffusion of new ideas, etc., do owe their origin to the missionaries.

But, the prime factor which induced such mammoth changes in the Khasi society was the missionaries for nearly a century or more. They loosened and unfastened the forces of adaptation and opposition. The changes took place in varying degrees and stages, in the hitherto unchanging society and grew more tangible over a period of time. This is discussed in this chapter. Missionary influence was the catalyst for the metamorphosis in the Khasi society.

Since the maximum exposure of Khasi Christianity, a study of the missionary impact will be largely of the impact caused by the Christians. The account given below will reveal that the contributions of missionaries lay mainly in the spheres of religious practices, education, medicine, health, crafts, skills such as printing, general economic development of character like developing self-reliance, appearance, cleanliness, hygiene, etc., whereas spheres such as the family, early political organisation, etc., had minimal influence. The Christians were the first to arrive and spread their faith; they spearheaded the process of conversion. Thus, in the order of things, the impact of Christianity ranks first.

Rev. Tomlin's assessment, after a century of missionary work in 1840, that the Khasi Hills were ripe for missionary work proved to be correct. Upon this assessment alone did the missionaries launch a systematic effort in this direction. Other successful missions with the ideology of other sects, some of them of the same denomination, had only a fringe influence on Khasi Christianity. Today, after nearly 140 years of the beginning of missionary work in a concerted manner in the Khasi Hills, there are 1,00,000 (According to provisional census data given in Chapter IV) Christians in a population of 1,65,000 in the Khasi Hills. The number of Christians alone in 1971 in the district is estimated to be 1,00,000 in a total Khasi population of 3,52,000. Only about 60% of the Khasis are Christians. Orthodox Khasis After the conversion of 1800, seven Khasis embraced Christianity. The Khasi population became Christian. 47% of the population had become Christian. It was 47% of the population and now about 60% of the population in the district and 60% of the Khasis are Christians. There is a slight discrepancy in the figures recorded from the church institutions and the census data.<sup>2</sup>

Why is Christianity strong in the Khasi Hills and Hinduism have made far lesser impact? On

## THE EFFECT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

have married Muslims have embraced Islam, some have adopted Muslim ways or have retained the earlier religion. There has been no blend or via-media. The converts were either Khasis—either the Brahmsos or those influenced by the Rama Krishna Mission or those who underwent *Uksha* (initiation)—number hardly a thousand. It was that the main factor for the success of Christianity in the Khasi Hills was that the earliest Christian missionaries offered a true solution to their spiritual problems. It was further that by the advent of Christianity, many tribals had forgotten their traditional ways and had lost their main basic directions. As a result, a search for a new light and identity became imperative. Tribal converts were inflamed by their absorption in a new religion. Much of the success of Christianity was due to a small band of devoted workers in the shape of missionaries.

The change in religious affiliations was also due to the fact that the indigenous religious practices had been largely forgotten by orthodox Khasis. The elaborate and intricate rituals could not be explained satisfactorily as they had been handed down orally. There were many problems of many Khasis who had been attracted to the novelty of another religion attracted by the fact that following the religion of the rulers implied obvious rewards were two: on this earth, and in the next. It was a person into His arms. Admission to schools, hospitals, jobs, help in cash or kind was given to the Khasis by missionaries and Christians. This was a preference over others.

The static conditions of life in the Khasi Hills led to stagnation. Often, people were being cheated and exploited. These factors may be organised under the heading of socio-cultural disintegration: and the following factors are presented below, by some of which the community at that time could be judged:

1. Economic inadequacy.
2. Cultural confusion, meaning essentially loss of identity.

3. High frequency of unhappy homes.
4. Few and weak associations such as visiting organisational memberships.
5. Few patterns of recreation.
6. High frequency of mental instability.
7. High frequency of interpersonal hostility.
8. Weak and fragmented network of commu

The psychological concomitants of the Khasi time were suspicion, anxiety, depression and a lack of human affairs.

The hardships and persecutions of the early Christians. The tribe ex-communicated them; they lost inheritance: even funeral rites are reported to be in cases of dispute. And yet the faith in religion remained unshaken.

After the initial culture-shock inevitable in such a transition, Christianity alone of the other new religions, which came in contact, took roots in the soil. It is marked that the Khasis have more readily adopted Christianity and European civilisation than any other tribe in India.<sup>4</sup> He also observed that in a remote corner of the Khasis, under the guidance of the missionaries, came a nation with its own literature; Khasi and Jaintia dialects of Assam has the privilege of having the vernaculars taught at the Calcutta University. The influence of European ideas also affected the social organisation.

Certain new problems arose initially with conversion. They were settled by different parties in different ways. That in the year 1857, when *Ram Sing Syiem* of both *Syiems* and *Myntris* who had become Christians, was not recognised as state ceremonies had to be performed in the spirit of the old religion.<sup>5</sup> *Ram Singh* was a son of *Manick*, an orthodox Khasi and *Borsir* who had embraced Christianity, was deprived of the office. The electors felt that the fact that *K. Mil* had embraced Christianity could not deprive him of the *Syiems* office. It was a female *Syiem* to perform state religious duties. An old informant gave an instance of a Christian

*phlang* who married a non-Christian—Khasi and thereby lost his membership of the church. In the early days, Christians kept away from such social gatherings. In 1939, in a Khasi house, there was a gathering for drinking, whether Catholics could cut with the orthodox Khasis. Catholic missionaries were against converts to take part in any religious functions of gentiles or Protestants. On the other hand, orthodox Khasis argued that the Christian humanitarian work as a means to further conversion were against Christians. Nearly 75% of orthodox Khasi farmers insisted that the labourers on his farm must work on Sundays. The landlords compelled Christian labourers to work on Sundays. Orthodox Khasis attached great importance to their religious and social ways; it gave them a sense of identity. In the year 1908, when the cremation of *Cherra* (*Shra*) took place, the Government gave a loan from the Government for conducting the ceremony. With the advent of Christianity and western civilization, transformation in social life became inevitable. The Khasis abandoned their former religious beliefs, accepting Christian teachings and observances, but, they still preserve their inheritance, their household usages and observances, their cultural and political customs. Funeral customs, worship and other animistic celebrations are still observed in purely Christian areas. In the Western world, it is common to donate to the worship of *Chandi*. The Khasis still preserve them. However, there are changes in the practice and observances of religious customs. They are more superficially observed than in the past. Megalithic erections (dolmens and menhirs) have been abandoned today by all Christian sects and all Khasis.<sup>6</sup>

As contact between the Christian and orthodox Khasis grew, the problem of acculturation grew acute. Intimate and prolonged contact with the Hindus led to a slow and gradual assimilation of Hindu customs. With Muslims, the contact was neg-



onary work rendered the tempo of change for the proper adjustment of tribals. The old Khasi thought began to be shaken. It witnessed the degradation of Khasi societies into castes or outcastes. Whether the results are judged by the amount of money or time spent or by the character involved or service rendered, the missionaries will be considered significant. Orthodox and Hindu Khasis began to change into Christian converts. This reflects that, in part, psychic unity was restored. As a result of a larger influx of outsiders into the Khasi Hills, particularly the upland plateau of Rhynriams due to inter-marriage and communications. Yet, the basic features peculiar to the groups—the *Bhois*, *Wars*, *Lyngams* and *Khasis*—into a different economy and dialect, though the culture of the ancient Khasis too, revolving around the nuclear familiar unit) and Khasi religion remained unchanged. The reason for this is the conscious movement for the preservation of the old Khasi culture, which would be discussed later. Even though the hold of the Khasi *Nia* is loosening as Christianity grew in strength, it has withstood the assault on it by modern technologies. In the Mizo Hills (now Mizoram) the population is Christian although missiology began in the Khasi Hills; but, only about 60% of the Khasis are orthodox. The hold of the Khasi religion is an eloquent testimony to its basic strength. A crucial question arises: while numerical increase in conversion is to be judged by mere numbers or change in the personality attitudes? It is remarked once that hearts and not the head are to be changed. Success of Christianity in the Khasi Hills is that the converts maintain many an old tradition. The existence of a pro-Khasi cultural movement amidst the influence of different religions and civilisations in the hills has crept into general social life. A new

## POPULATION TRENDS

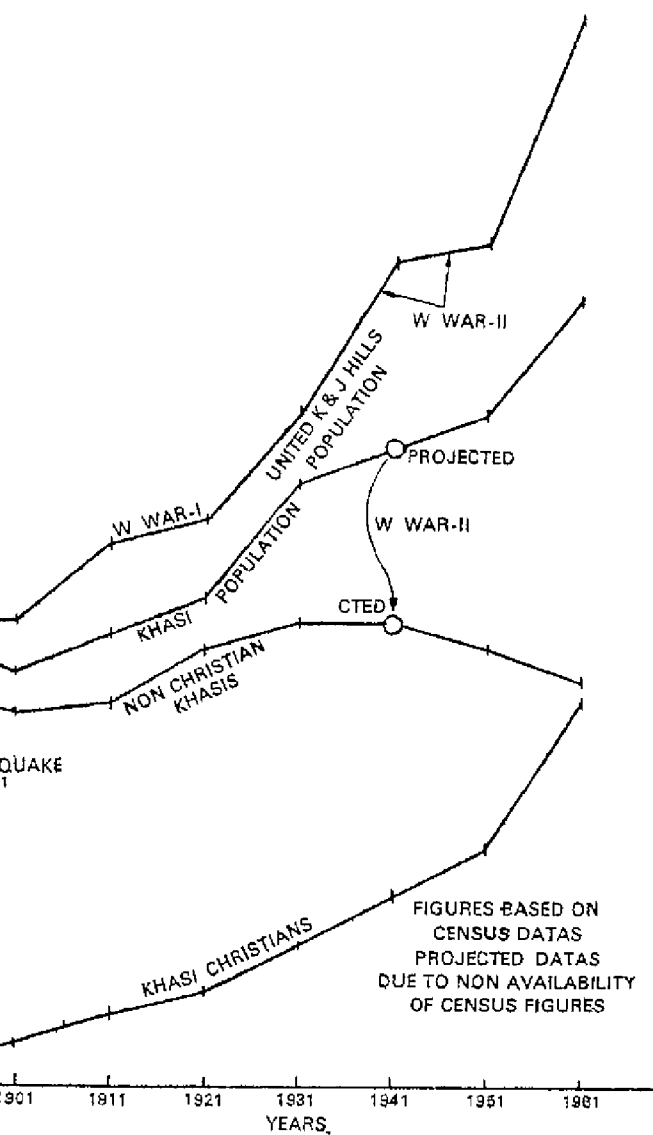


ILLUSTRATION 1

## THE KHASIS

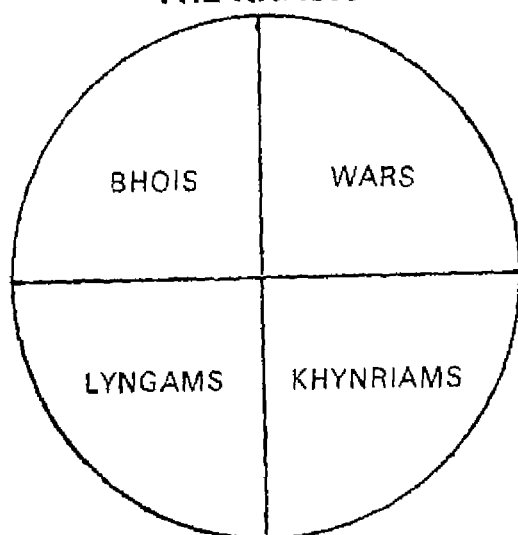


ILLUSTRATION 2

## SOCIAL HIERARCHY AMONG THE EARLY KHASIS

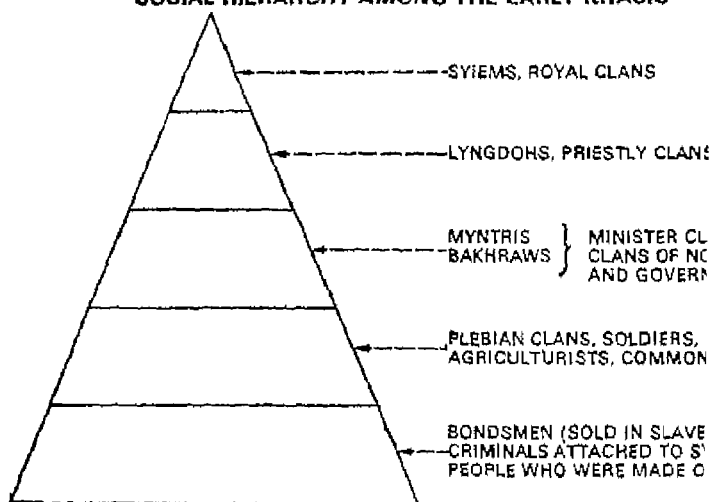
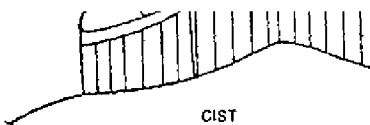


ILLUSTRATION 3

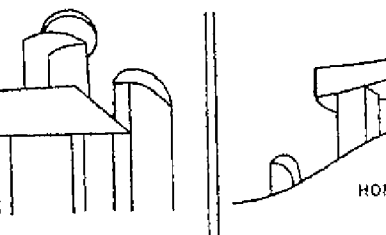
C



CIST

ILLUSTRATION 4

MONUMENTAL GROUPS



HOM

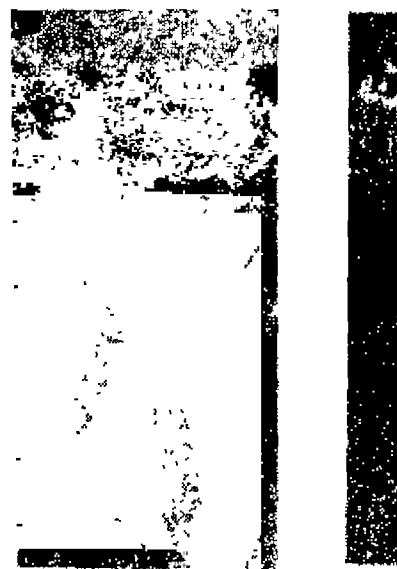
ILLUSTRATION 5

MONUMENTAL STONES



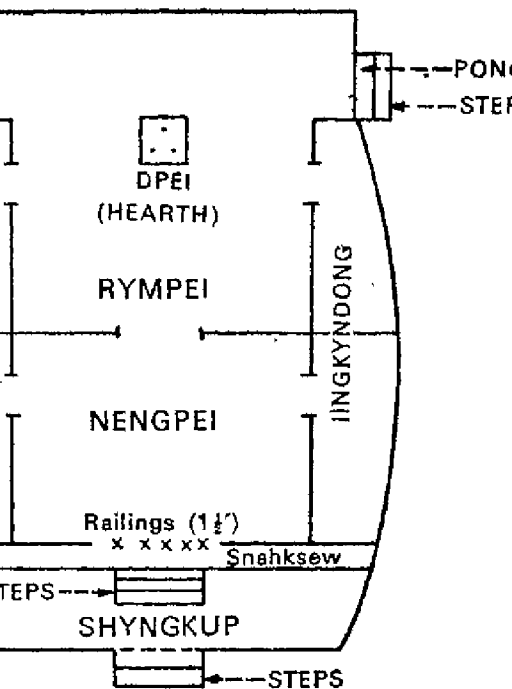
ILLUSTRATION 6

## NONGKREM DA



ILLUSTRATION

# PLAN OF A KHASI HOUSE



'IINGKYNDONG' are sleeping rooms  
 raised above the main floor.  
 side walls are turtle-shaped  
 roofs are boat-shaped

ILLUSTRATION 8

RURAL KHASI HOUSE

## POLITICAL SET-UP OF THE EARLY KHASIS

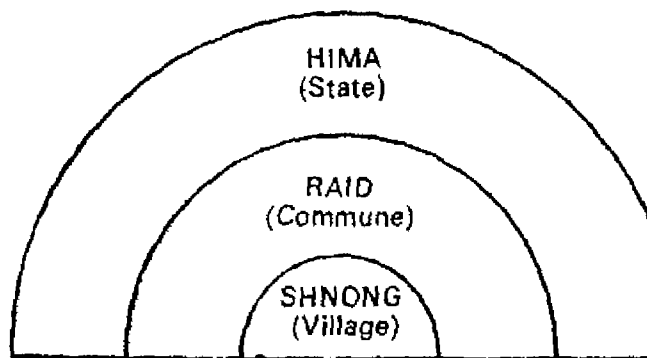


ILLUSTRATION 10

## MAIN CONCEPTS IN KHASI RELIGION

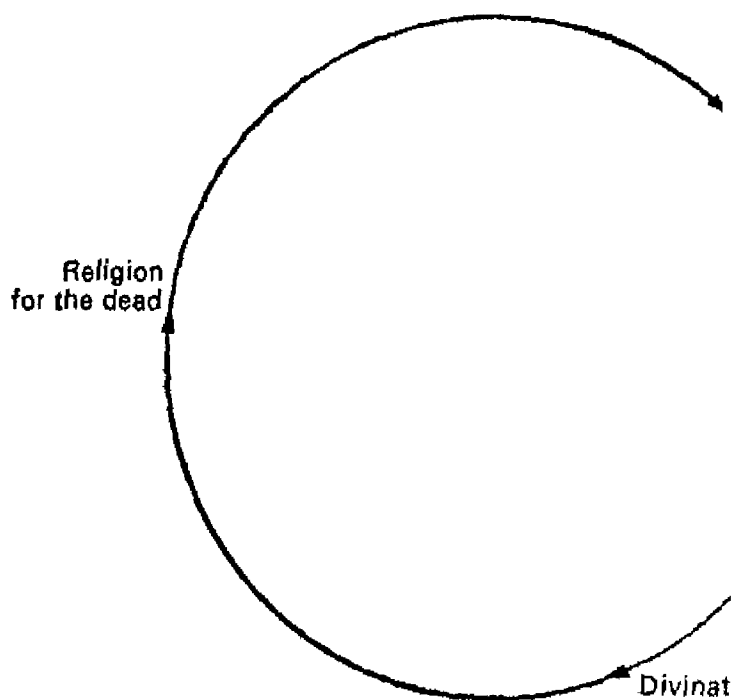


ILLUSTRATION 11

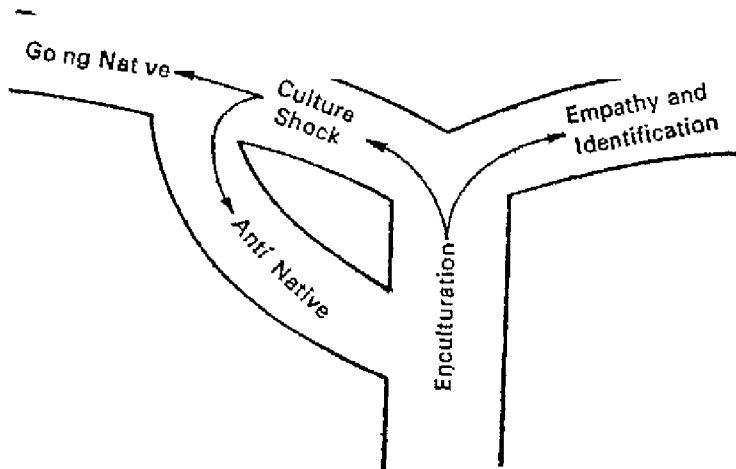


ILLUSTRATION 12

DIAGRAM SHOWING  
CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON KHASI SOCIETY

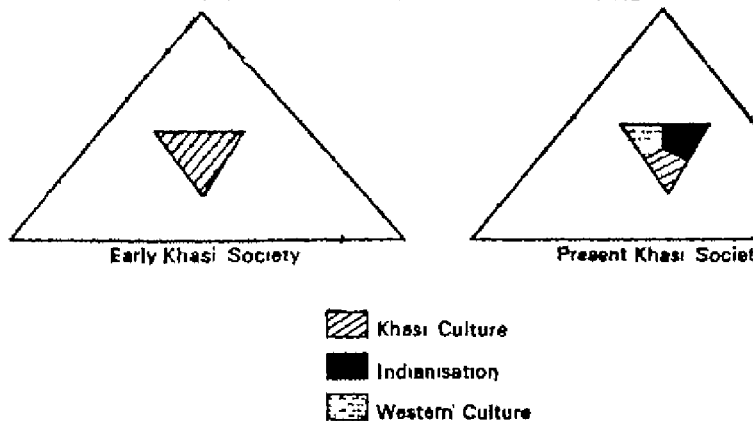
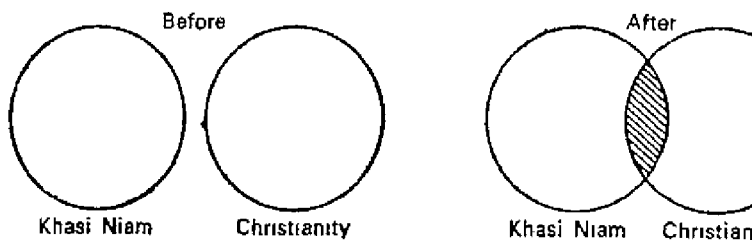


ILLUSTRATION 13

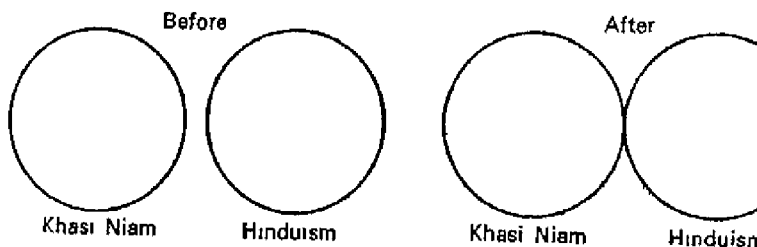


## IMPACT OF ALIEN RELIGIONS ON KHASI NIAM RELIGION

### I Christianity and Khasi Niam :



### II. Hinduism and Khasi Niam :



### III. Islam and Khasi Niam :

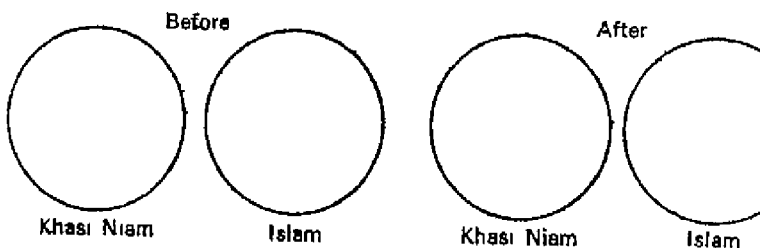


ILLUSTRATION 14

## CT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

merged, in the sense of a fairly advanced c  
d of the old and the new.

### al Hierarchy

The earlier social hierarchical pattern with the  
top of the pyramid, followed by priestly clan  
nobleman, soldiers, agriculturists and co  
lsmen at the base, was disturbed. The classe  
se sold in slavery and criminals made to worl  
(class), became extinct. Prisoners were no  
slavery of previous days became extinct. But  
avery, occasioned by acute poverty, were still  
backward pockets of the *Bhoi* area. Christ  
egalitarian society, and Christian teachings  
e for emergence of a new melange in the Kha  
order had no room for the priestly clans. T  
dominating the market led to the consequ  
t of social order on the basis of wealth.  
in the social pyramid increasingly cut ac  
ctions. Further, since the earlier respecti  
e not followed strictly by clans, the new socia  
e was more of a sub-cultural than cultural n

### ations with the Plainsmen

Mutual curiosity marked the first contact  
ple of the plains and the hills along with d  
i, fear and fights. The transition from a bart  
sh economy changed the basis for social rela  
nomy brought with it a kind of modernity, ir  
hythm of greater independence and faster  
iving social systems. Stresses, strains and  
owed. Many Khasis lacked the will to grow  
ere the will was there, there was not sufficien  
nomy or enough dynamism and flexibility  
is, the progress was slow. Regional imbalan  
inevitable disparity grew developing a hian  
nsmen and the Khasis. Frequent and  
ween the two has not dispelled these 'not toc  
ich were historical and ethnical in origin, t  
n aggravated and tuated by the appeara

sionaries. The Khasis turned to them with  
sidered themselves superior to the rest.

## nily

The earlier large familial institutions (*kpo*  
be modified and a certain ambiguity arc  
her socio-religious customs viz. family cr  
emonies, ancestor-worship and memorial  
down, and ties of kinship loosened. Nor  
uming a new importance. While basically,  
ained a living and active institution, the *ing*  
size owing to families migrating on a scale la  
ule earlier it spanned six generations on  
esent generation depth is only three gener  
es, two. Another new trend was to switch o  
ch existed in a mild form in the *War* area.

While the basic role of women still cor  
ther role of *kinder, kuche and kirche*, owing  
g economic independence, and the introducti  
ristian idea of patriarchal societies, two  
ticeable. The Christian women who, more  
x counterparts, supplemented their income  
means of small trade such as stitching,  
aving or by working as daily labourers, had  
gnity or self-respect about them than th  
omen. They began to nurture new ideas a  
ild-care and about house-keeping too. An e  
auty, a keen sense of aesthetics was develop  
riterion of sheer utility to which the women cl  
ys.

The other trend was, increasingly, fo  
oungest daughters and heiresses), more so  
ban areas, to surrender their rights to inher  
they wanted to be free of their social and  
ons. Even as early as 1900, under the influenc  
few orthodox heiresses did not stay in th  
required by ancient Khasi custom. The  
ences with their husbands. Although society  
ntred the woman did not act under as  
before from her maternal uncle and e der b

## EFFECT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

With new occupations growing like mushrooms, there was a corresponding increase in the number of educated women. This brought about a new social independence for women too. But they had no rights to participate in acts of legislation and judiciary. Neither could they appear in the court (durbar), nor could they elect the members of the council. Yet, women still occupied an important position in the community. They now had more freedom of movement. Women from aristocratic and cultured families were free from their own restrictions. A Khasi informant from a highly cultured family mentioned how, though educated, his own mother never left the premises of the family without being accompanied by a male—either a relative or close friend. His great grandmother had introduced this practice and he was in dignity about it. Despite the new opportunities, women had no intense desire to pursue a vocation. The reverence of female progenitors diminished. This was a feature of the later family organisation. The head of a clan, as before, adopted her children. The reverence of female progenitors prevailed but, as indicated earlier, there was a change in the position of women. Women dominated the family as male relatives of the *Kur*. They either managed the family or with the help of the husband. Legally and socially, despite a slight modification, the traditional pattern consequent upon the spread of Christianity enjoyed a high status. A case has been recorded by a native officer, who was at Nongkrem in 1904, that he found that while he was there, one of his subjects had imposed a fine of Rs 300 on one of his subjects for disrespectfully of one of his female relatives. The missionaries ordained women to be loyal to their domestic duties and to be busy in the task of furthering family ties. The impact of missionary influence was that, women now enjoyed far more latitude in their movement and were quite free in their movement and participation in political and social affairs. In continuation of this, they assumed control of important family matters and showed themselves thrifty in the management of the household. Men have lagged behind in this respect. The Khasi and Jaintia are socially and economically backward Bhoi and

technically, descent is through the mother but meaningless due to extreme poverty. My own Christian families influenced by western culture acquired a new sense of assertion; to this extent a change in the earlier status of women, which now came in line with that of men. Men disapproved interference of the wife's male and other relatives concerning the children and the family. This trend was more marked in the case of urban families, Christian ones influenced by Hinduism. But in the case of majority rural families, the earlier ideas and pattern of family life were still dominant. There were some minor variations but these were not significant. Educated women were now interested in work besides the home. They were also interested in politics. It was generally felt that it was in the fitness of things that women were politically more active; interest in politics of women led on to a chain of wider interests in social, legal and even religious.

It has been stressed that in early days, the structure of the early Khasi society was in a sense matrilineal. The significant roles of the eldest maternal uncle and the mother. Now, the importance shifted from the mother to the father. Children came closer to the latter than to the former. The earlier family ties loosened. The clan was no longer as cohesive a bond as before. Traditional religious practices and beliefs have died down. Economic circumstances, widening disparities, changing times, but because of a change in the social structure with the dying down of the practices of the past. The clan stone (*mawbah*), and erecting the clan house, erstwhile delicate but strong tie of *Apot* which was matrilineal in nature has also been broken. As a result, at a time in Khasi social history, the problem of illegitimate children in families where children were not close to their own families as before. Child marriage became a problem too. There was a confusion of authority of the older members of the family. The authority of the clan was felt in every matter, leading to a new era.

## Marriage

Earlier, courtship had been the traditional mode of marriage, although arranged marriages prevailed among the aristocratic families. Their free sexual play but, chastity was valued. The traditional pattern of courtship became a more formal one after marriage. While the basic modes remained the same, the elaborate practices associated with marriage gradually declined. Marriage ceremonies became less elaborate and these declined considerably. The number of marriages increased. Divinations were not common. Prayers were offered to *U Blei*; the mixing of the liquor (*Kiad*) out of the jars brought by the bride and the groom was the usual basis of marriage as an institution. Desertion and divorces were common among the orthodox Khasis. One in five marriages among the Christians, divorces, extra-marital sexual relations had increased although the number of adulteries came down among the Christians. My observation was that among all sects marriage had been stabilised. All the earlier rules of abstinence in marriage were strictly observed. During the later years, the situation changed. The new political importance of the Khasis led to better developed communication and a boost to the economy; the missionaries could not do the latter. The influx of outsiders into the Khasi hills and mobility led to increase in the number of marriages and marriages with non-Khasis.

Inter-marriages between Khasis and non-Khasis were common among the Lushais and among non-tribals, between Khasis, Bengalis and Nepalis. Exogamy and endogamy in the Khasi society followed the same pattern. In the case of Khasis married to Muslim women, the Khasis had embraced Islam.

The exogamous unit, *Kur* or *Jaid* (clan), which descended through females, has remained the same for centuries. The missionaries could not dislodge this matri-centred social institution.

er, the clan is strictly exogamous, as b  
 of *Umsohsun* told me how in the early  
 y, the Catholic missionaries tried to in  
 ce, which, according to the Khasis wa  
 d. Violation of it amounted to the comm  
 e early years of their work in the Khasi Hi  
 German Fathers) who preached the Catho  
 orted some inter and intra-*Kur* marriag  
*Mawphlang*, *Laitkynsew* and *Laitkor*. Ever  
 ed to this. When such marriages took p  
 a positive encouragement of the missionari  
 places was affected. Not only was fu  
 ed but all the Christians went back to  
 religion again. The work of the mission  
 te setback; never again did any missionary  
 ce.

There were changes in certain wedding ritu  
 Society became more relaxed; for instan  
 males of the female's *kur* could now atte  
 er, the groom stayed on with the bride  
 of two or three children and then moved  
 e of his own. Over the years this stay be  
 aid that only in the interior, there are oc  
 ple staying on in the bride's house till the  
 . Otherwise, in most cases, the couple  
 h or so, and in urban areas, after a few da  
 Although marriage remained a sacramenta  
 of abstinence were observed strictly, s  
 s relating to marriage died down gradu  
 e nineteenth century. Most informant  
 ger generation of the early twentieth  
 ve in them while those who were still you  
 about them. The custom of offering b  
 d which the entire Khasi culture revolved,  
 thodox Khasis and by a large majority  
 ified themselves with the Khasi society. M  
 and ordinances that permitted and recog  
 dows, widowers and divorcees were stil  
 g the Catholics. Procreation was consider

marriage. In the earlier Khasi society, methods were not known; strength lay in numbers. It was that men should multiply. Children were blessings of God. As the setting changed, the focus on land in certain areas; flourishing of the new wealth anew and its display; the clan came to put it up and there was a glaring economic disparity and awareness of it. The increasing responsibility of a child (better clothing, education, etc.) and there was a new awareness of the limitations imposed by outsiders. On the one hand, the emphasis on numbers and on the other, the barrenness of children was experienced. And yet, family planning was not acceptable—more so in rural areas than the majority of urbanites. The strong feeling against it was adequately by the following couplet.

*Man la u briew ba la kha*

*I wan rah la u soh khaw.*

Every person who is born has his share of God (God provides for every one).

Khasis who opposed family planning quoted this proverb in support of their point of view.

In the later years, as before, no stigma was attached to it, except in the *War* area, where belief in maintaining the cause of barrenness prevailed. It was attributed to, so that the cause of barrenness could be the sin of the family (*daw*), which had fallen on the woman. As before, this did not prevent a divorce should a man so desire. Concubinage was accepted by early Khasis as a part of human nature. Christians accepted it as a sin although according to the Church, it was a sin. My enquiries in the field revealed that in the hills, there was less concubinage; at least, a man who kept a concubine was called *U* and had no economic obligations to the woman and her children. In the early years, marriages of Christians were beset by initial difficulties which included social and religious principles. An instance may be given of a orthodox *Khadduh* (as such an heiress) who



## EFFECT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

What can explain more change in the dress of women? Some informants mentioned that in the Khasi social system, women were expected to wear traditional dress in order to retain this position, they wore traditional dress in the typical Khasi way although traditional dress was expensive and cumbersome. Other informants mentioned that the more convenient and inexpensive dress was adopted. Women in the *Bhoi* and *Lyngnam* areas were mostly engaged in field work, tended domestic animals and performed household chores and were extremely poor, dressed in traditional dress in a functional manner and voiced almost no opinion about the traditional dress. The general feeling was that the change in dress was not a gift of the early Christians. From early days women wore similar dresses.

The Christian missionaries explained the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. Milk was used entirely for the purposes of domestic use and came to be eaten on a larger scale. The missionaries were also responsible for the breaking of the taboo regarding milk as a food item among the traditionalists and the progressive non-Christians also explained the importance of milk as a food. Yet, in many places, more so in the traditional areas, people did not take milk as a beverage or with tea. Milk was not available, or it was too expensive or it was considered that it was an animal secretion or an impure food. The staple food of the Khasis remained the rice. The daily meal of the average person consisted of rice, chillies and a dry tuberos root. Manual workers and labourers and porters carrying heavy loads on their backs ate three meals as breakfast, lunch and evening one in the noon and one in the evening. Non-manual labourers took two meals daily with a drink in between except water. About 40% of the informants belonging to the age-group 40-70 years said that they did not take tea. They ate sumptuous meals and only ate rice. Rice-cakes prepared in two or three

ngles, berries and wild roots and common  
um and marrow (also known as squa  
es and sweet potatoes; bananas, were  
sh, boiled beef, pork and chicken were  
David Scott introduced the potato to  
a missionary qualified in agriculture  
y years ago, for introducing many new  
s who stayed in *Shillong* and the nearby  
ned the importance of tending vegetable  
re, etc. Cauliflower, cabbage, a variety of  
ls, capsicums and fruits such as pineap  
es were new to the Khasis. Now the  
ar. Yet, even in interior villages, w  
nce or advice of Government had not  
it, a 90-year-old informant said that wor  
ended vegetables prayed to *U Blei* (God)  
after the crops. During a visit to the villa  
e *War* area, I met a widow who had been  
d to the small patch of kitchen vegetable  
she was better, she came out and sp  
ot think that I have forgotten you, or neg  
vell. Do not have any ill feeling.' Wh  
ered, she found that the crop of vegetable  
old me how she was grateful to *U Blei*  
s, and the consequent neglect of the vega  
ll as any crop that was well-tended.  
y the early years of the twentieth century  
ular drink. Most urbanites took tea with  
he consumption, on the average, was six  
In the villages situated on the main roa  
, while many Khasis took tea with sugar  
number did not take either milk or sugar  
ste', I was told. In the interior, tea was  
adding sugar by most families except a f  
progressive. Coffee was taken by very  
es living in and around *Shillong*; so were  
and squashes. The latter are too ex  
is.  
Meals were normally eaten with fing  
tians, especially those living in urban areas

utlery and crockery. Spoons made of meta

In addition to earthen vessels and ba  
ainers used earlier to store water and grain  
inium, copper and brass were used. Glas  
s (the latter more so) were used for drink  
of spoons, and vessels could have arise  
ating the missionaries.

Taboos regarding food and other items s  
f milk were also not observed very stric  
ve members of the *Nongtariang jaid* (clan)  
ge which was earlier considered a taboo fo  
nched inhibitions against particular item  
down change and by loosening taboos i  
i society was made more dynamic by the n  
nter-ethnic marriages brought some cha  
F beef and pork was not prohibited in Kha  
tarily, those who were married to Hindu  
come under their influence, gave thes  
nced by Hinduism, whether by the Bra  
akrishna Mission also acted likewise.

## ulants

Drinking still forms very much a part of  
i despite the fact that Christianity, K  
uism preach temperance. Indeed man  
are habitual drinkers. Jones, the P  
ry taught the distillation of liquor to the  
rice-beer or a spirit distilled from rice or r  
drink was of two kinds: (1) *Ka Kiad Hia*  
Bamboo liquor (*suid kiad* was also drunk  
made out of potatoes. Most of the hous  
ed the drink at home; for, drinks formed a  
cial and religious ceremonies. With t  
onaries, sophisticated drinks common  
introduced to the affluent Khasis, the  
Christians. The Christian missionaries  
drink to some of their visitors during  
ugh the church forbade drinking.

Tobacco was earlier either chewed or sn  
a resembled the *hookah* of the north Ind

ruralites, the practice continued. By the 1930s, *biris* (rolled leaves into which tobacco was pressed) had become the dominant form of smoking, and a quarter of a century later, cigarette smoking was also common. Among the rich Khasis, cigars were considered the style. Indigenously made bamboo cigarettes were also common.

An attempt was made by the British to curb the use of opium into the malarious *Bhoi* country. However, many Khasis from other areas also used opium. This practice has all but vanished now. The goods previously provided by opium are now available from other sources.

### Religion

The Christian missionaries preached 'scientific' beliefs which they disbelieved and caused a considerable decline in belief in clan totems among Christian Khasis. This decline, in turn, led to a change in the eating of the clan totem. (b) regarding the eating of the clan totem. This was especially among educated members and the younger generation. For instance, the members of the *Thakli* clan, who were strictly forbidden the eating of crabs, now eat them without taboo. Beliefs that certain objects as, for example, crabs, or animals, also died down among the Khasis.

### Medicine

*Dawai kynbat*, local herbal medicines, were still used by the Khasis. The Western missionaries provided modern medicines and the Hindu missionaries provided Ayurvedic medicines. The Western missionaries also introduced vaccination and inoculation as a measure against disease. In the early stages, the Khasis kept their traditional measures; as informants insisted, chickens and pigs were looked upon as favours from the Creator. A foreign missionary became a symbol of prestige and soon became a matter of conviction. The Khasis were convinced of the efficacy of the medicines and gradually, the faith was built up. The orthodox Khasis saw that the general health was improved and that Christians were being cured of their diseases, they also began taking new medicines.

were more expensive and were within the reach. Among some Khasis, the belief given by medicines were more effective. By the end of the twentieth century, 70% of the urban population and rural population were taking allopathic medicine. The first consultation was given by a *Kaviraj* (practitioner) whose father was a compounder working as a doctor.

As a result of the excellent pioneer work done by the missionaries, ignorance and fear about surgery was overcome. A 30-year-old Christian woman from *Cherra* said that she was taken to the Hospital of the Welsh Mission. When the surgeon advised surgery, she consulted her old grandmother too supported the doctor's advice. She had to have said that doctors are the men who know and do good. Of course, a lot of perseverance and patience was required of the doctors. A 60-year-old Presbyterian from Wales narrated an incident about 25 years ago. A 40-year-old man was suffering from a deadly disease and severe abdominal pain. He was isolated and seeing his condition the villagers kept away from him. Finally, the man himself went to stay near the doctor. He isolated himself from the entire village. The doctor visited him every day; at times he took it and at times he refused. He was upset and his temper grew as his condition became more miserable. He became an outcaste and would not talk to anyone and became cranky. The doctor continued to visit him through his wife, asking if I could visit him. He told his wife that he would jump off the cliff from the hospital. Again, I sent word to the desperate man asking him to come for him, and the man sent word that he was ready. Gradually, medicines were sent to him but he refused these were thrown away in anger. After some time, I gave him a change and the man started taking the medicines and felt relief and as the man felt better, he started taking medicines regularly. After a few days, he came to the hospital and enquired as to who had sent him the medicines. I told him if I could meet him. When I met him

ment recommended further, for he came  
 is Saviour. He accompanied me to *Shi*  
 tor, I have placed my life in your hands.  
 e.' He was operated upon and very gradu  
 returned to the village. Then onwards  
 e there were about six Christian houses  
 gnorance about surgery was removed." A  
 from the village *Wahkdait* said how  
 ng (foreign) doctor had come and  
 nts having cold and cough, he gave t  
 y medicine. 'The tablet was small, white  
 on telling each visitor. Gradually, when  
 old, cough or headache they would volun  
 r and ask for the white magical tablet.  
 nant whose maternal grandfather ga  
 nes, said that the Khasis of his village  
 believed in the efficacy of these medicines  
 onary, inspired by the Vedanta phil  
 ge of universal religion of Swami Vi  
 otic zeal burning in him, came to the villag  
 t miles away from *Cherrapunjee*) upon  
 ocal Khasis who wanted to learn Benga  
 at the Christian missionaries there were  
 re of the Hindu religion to the Khasis.  
 a practitioner of homeopathy. Single-hand  
 l and opened a dispensary there. His info  
 i *Kynbat* (Khasi herbal medicine) was n  
 ffective by some Khasis as allopathy or ho  
 the latter to be cheaper; further, th  
 y available. But many Khasis had fai  
 ine too, as it was cheap, effective in ce  
 gave a sense of identity, as it had been  
 ncestors. With the increasing influence o  
 opathic schools of medicine, the earlier  
 inal practice and religion ceased to be a  
 umber of Khasis who believed that sic  
 gry evil spirits and through the agency  
 ds declined, but this belief was still  
 tians too, in times of crisis, are re  
 ached *Nongknias* for worship to appease

## OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASIS

one-setting too, this medicine was considered by many Khasis.

It has been emphasised earlier that natural *ph* and *sohphirah* were used by the Khasis. Ground charcoal and the skin of the *ph* were used for the cleaning of the teeth. These were not regular. Rinsing of the mouth after was the body cleansed, the hair combed and the nails trimmed regularly. The cleanliness of person and surroundings, boiling drinking water, regular bathing and washing, and fresh clothes. Earlier, the higher-ups were particular about the cleaning and general appearance. The missionaries, patiently and persistently, inculcated better grooming and hygienic habits. Thus, the people became aware of the importance of cleanliness. The contribution of the Christian missionaries was in the grooming of the people through hygiene. Soap, toothbrushes came to be used increasingly in use. The use of wooden, bamboo and bone combs also increased. These were brought from the markets of the plains and the hill troup.

### Change to Child-Birth

There was change in the attitude to child-birth. In the days, old and experienced women from the hills attended delivery cases. This was the case in the interior, for, few rural families could afford to go to the plains. There were dispensaries and hospitals in the plains. The affluent rural families did avail of the services. In the plains, there were a number of hospitals. Working women of labourers went there for delivery. They stayed normally for three or four days. The placenta was not preserved for the naming ceremony.

### Conception and Pregnancy

In later years, although biological facts of pregnancy were known to the Khasis, they still believed that the will of God was supreme. Most of the earlier practices were observed by all sects of Khasis.

h, for life was held sacred. Missionary  
any marked impact as those earlier beliefs

005

Many early taboos died down, for the  
s preached against them and the prog  
dox Khasis came under their influence. For  
s a taboo (*sang*) to build a house with stor  
sides, to use iron or nails in building a h  
one timber in building the hearth and a  
d earlier. In the early years of the n  
the house of a prominent Khasi was bu  
he first square-shaped house built in the  
earlier taboos were not observed, local lab  
it and labour had to be hired from Sylhe  
cutting of trees from sacred forests (*Lav  
doh*) and many other taboos were also no  
onaries spoke strongly against the observi  
asons. It meant denying certain things o  
ment; and, it also meant identification wit  
re. The taboos were observed less strict  
ers; for instance, the taboo regarding the  
after the death of a spouse placed on a wi  
marriage near vanished in urban areas  
riages were few in number. But some othe  
d on the Khasi rural mind e g, not killing  
without first throwing rice in the direction  
g with any one, except with one's fello  
crashing of paddy was going on. Normally  
hunting, they did not observe the taboo s

### Witchcraft and Sorcery

Witchcraft and sorcery were tinged with  
before. In decent company, this topic was  
1. The belief in witchcraft and sorcery of  
dox, urban and Christian Khasis died do  
also vanished considerably among many  
ted classes. But, among certain sectio  
belief was so deep-rooted that whenever a  
believed it to be due to the sacrifices th



2. In the beginning of the twentieth century, cases when murders were reported to have taken place in the rural as well as near the urban areas, the victims were sacrificed to Gods.<sup>8</sup> Among some families, the practice continued to a certain extent. And, among Christians, too. Some people, both orthodox and Christians, held the belief partially, 'to partially appease the wrath of the Gods', gave bits of cloth, or strands of hairs, or offerings, offered these, so that the wrath of the *Thangmen* would be over them. The fear of the 'serpent monster' was still prevalent among the Khasis.

### Khasi

The presence and activities of the missionaries opened the strong revivalist forces within the orthodox forces in Khasi society consolidating against the spread of and conversion. It was thus that the *Seng Khasi* movement came into being.

The *Seng Khasi* was founded by some educated Khasis with the object of preservation of Khasi culture and religion. The original idea was to form a *Thangmen's* association and Khasis of all denominations. But the Christians were militant and it became a body of orthodox Khasis. The persons associated with the movement are Jeebon Chandra Nath Roy, and Kupardan; and a Charan Das, was also an important member. The principles of preserving Khasi culture were discussed and the guiding principles of the *Seng Khasi* were formulated.

1. The Association or assembly would consist of those who adhere to the tenets of kinship and the traditions of Khasi ancestors.
2. Members' belief should be that man is born into the world to earn righteousness through good deeds; man is born to seek love and propagate it.
3. Members should respect their fellow-men and have a sense of humanity and divinity.
4. God, the sovereign Lord is to be acknowledged as the Almighty Creator, the Giver of all.

at present too, the Christians barring the *phur* and Khasi dances, keep away from this *phur*. Liberal Christians do help in or witness *phur* activities. Earlier, the Christians, upon conversion, discarded dance costumes and jewellery, thus distancing themselves from the early dances. Though strongly and highly anti-Christian in nature, the work of the *phur* has continued over the years. The body runs a social welfare centre is run in *Sohryng Khami*; a *phur* is published annually. Other activities include the annual dance festival, *Shad suk Mynsiem*. So far as dances are concerned are *Langkyrdem*, *Mawsynram* and *Mawphlang*. The annual dance festival, *Shad Suk Mynsiem*, is held in *Shad Suk Mynsiem*. The Khasi Hills since ages have been a land of dances. The periodic dancing was called *phur*. In vogue today are the *Shad Suk Mynsiem* and *Langkyrdem* dance. The former lasts for two or three days and is a dance for happiness and peace of mind. The latter is a dance for happiness and peace of mind. As before, the *phur* is a part in it; costumes are as gorgeous as before. The present general feeling is that Christianity is inroads in the earlier Khasi culture and is a threat to it. The *Seng Khasi* is helping the revival of Khasi culture, thereby preventing the absorption of Khasi culture entirely. A Christian informant said that the *phur* is greatly felt; for the revival of Khasi dancing, the *phur* brings all the Khasis closer. He said that in olden times, such activities could be performed in the *phur* of earlier ceremonies or rites in *phur*. This movement began basically as a reaction to the influence of Christianity, anticipating the danger to Khasi culture. Later on, owing to the influence of the *phur* Khasis, some of them convinced of the value of Christianity, there was a reaction to the attitude of preserving all aspects of Khasi culture. Thus, many ceremonies and rituals are being revived, more sentimental than rational; an attempt was made to convert Khasi minds, so that they would accept Christianity. The movement, however, is handicapped greatly by the lack of workers and finance on the one hand, and

s of Christians to spread Christianity. One of the main factors is the increasing acceptance of western culture, a phenomenon that is nationwide. A parallel may be drawn in other resurgent and revivalist movements of similar nature in the country, most of which are in opposition to Christian teachings and the Christian religious beliefs and the Hindu religion.

### Education

Second only to conversion, and in fact a close companion, ranks as the most important contribution of Christian missionaries in the Khasi Hills. The main object of imparting education was to further the process has resulted in opening to the Khasis, all the wide horizons of knowledge through education.

As per oral traditions, the Khasis had a script in the floods. Later, some Khasi village scribes called *masoi*, who could read and write on plantain or fan-palm leaves. The British missionaries to come to the Khasi Hills, attempted to translate the New Testament into Khasi by the use of this script. The translation was considered so imperfectly intelligible to the natives.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the Bengali orthography with its more complex phonetic system on one hand unsuitable to the Khasi language, and the Bengali translators proved inadequate on the other, over spoken Khasi. Thus the attempt was unsuccessful. It was for this reason that the missionaries planned to abandon the use of Bengali script. Only in 1841, with the advent of the Welsh missionaries, a script for the Khasi language was introduced, the use of the Roman alphabet, which fitted in a neat, uniform, and legible order. In adopting the Roman alphabet, phonetic adjustments were made to suit the Khasi language. The *Cherra* dialect became the standard language for the purpose of script.

With the birth of a script to the Khasi language, the education of the Khasis was laid. The process of the Khasis was thus a direct contribution of

Thomas Jones, who walked up to *Cherrapunji* is considered to be the father of Khasi. He brought a script to the language and with it began the process of formal education. This was the policy and thus his Mission's goals in the region. He frequently explained in a letter sent by him in 1800: 'The only plan which appears to me the best purpose is to establish schools in the hills, to teach the Khasis—children and adults—the principles of religion; and to instruct them in the principles of agriculture; or, in other words, to give them some of the knowledge which is given in our Sunday schools at home. I do not propose any other feature, except what may be necessary to bring the children to the schools, or to train them to make use of the natives to teach their fellow-tribesmen. In this way we shall not only bring them into the knowledge of gospel doctrines but also enable them to read and when we shall have translated the Holy Scriptures into their language, we shall, at least, in every family able to read, have the Bible able to understand them also—and I view this as an important step towards their evangelization. Through education, and through education, Thomas Jones laid the foundations by establishing schools in the Khasi Hills and prepared the first book. The first was the 'First Khasi Reader' (*Ka kha*), and the second, a translation, called 'Mother's Gift'. The many initial problems confronting the field of education were met and overcome through faith and perseverance. Opposition arose and it became evident that the missionaries were greatly influencing the students and eroded their traditional beliefs. In some instances, the boys refused to attend school. Five boys attending the school at Cherrapunji were threatened with a dreaded operation in view of the belief that a man who is thirsty *Thlen* secures the knot of a man's life. His family are doomed to a horrible death if he is not cured. He frequently resorted to egg-breaking to cure his ailments. The demons were in favour of the children attending school. As a result, schools were frequently

her or the attendance was irregular.<sup>11</sup> In Chapter IV the initial opposition attending Lewis in trying to educate the Khasi women is found at *Cherrapunjee*. There were certain opposition which provided a lighter relief to a group of orthodox Khasis appear to have been. An earlier script was lost owing to the will of Lewis his wish that Khasis remain without a script persisted when there were positive clashes between old values.

With the opening of schools in the interior for a formal training in academic and vocational matters from among the local population starting education in more and more schools. Technical training centres were also opened. A press was also established, making Christian publications. Making the local missions more independent, the translations were printed and shipped from the Khasi Hills. The efforts of various educational institutions have also been mentioned in Chapter IV. Until the advent of Independence in the twentieth century, the missions prepared their own text-books also, later conforming to the standards prescribed by the government.

As mentioned earlier, the government encouraged missionary efforts by means of grants. The missionaries recommended educated Khasis for jobs and thus gains from education. An incident is mentioned in Chapter V of the manner in which an Inspector was asked to recommend grants to a school on the condition that it was not imparting Christian religious teachings. This was referred to Mahatma Gandhi who wrote in support against such coercive practices of the government against Christianity. However, the missionary education was popular among the people owing to its high standard. It reformed the people by discipline, self-reliance (as against the earlier dependence) and cleanliness. Education also produced a new personality and leadership in every sphere of social, economic, political and professional.

Following the Welsh Presbyterian mission

mission that started work in the Khasi hills. Thus, the Catholics, the Ramoos and others began to spread education and thus broke the economic and social barriers of literacy and medical help accompanied by understanding. The Welsh Presbyterians, being the pioneers in the field, the quantity and the quality of education was of a high standard and the intelligentsia and elite thus began to emerge. With the passing of time and shifting of the Government to Shillong, which grew in importance in the North of Assam, the missionaries also carried on their work, and established a network of institutions. The Presbyterians had the maximum number of institutions supported by the government.

The initial impact of the missionary work, the availability of employment opportunities, medical facilities, education etc., led in a way, to an acceptance of the orthodox Khasis. While retaining their earlier culture, they were quick to realise the benefits of education imparted by the missionaries. In a journal<sup>12</sup> there was a lot of controversy about the work of the missionaries; so in *Sohra*, U M. J. J. started a small school in his compound. Many young males such as the father-in-law of Ka T. J. and U Sorki Dolor went to study Bengali in Calcutta. Others after them were the father of U Raimuni, the father of U Joy. The father of U Kishun, the father of U Ph. J. went to go to study Bengali in Sylhet. They felt that they would benefit from the Welsh who, instead, were spreading Christianity through education in Khasi and in the hills. As there was no satisfactory and complete education in the Welsh Schools, the respective fathers of U J. J., and of Delising and others went to study Bengali. They followed U Sib Charan Roy, U Babu Singh. Many others also followed and went to study Bengali. Babu Jeebon Roy later started a school (1877-78), which has now become a Government School and as a consequence there are

double graduates in the Khasi Hills. An English school was also started by the people themselves. While the imposition of an alien religion brought through the medium of education evoked the orthodox Khasis, there was also the quick recognition of the benefits of such education. Thus there could not be against the missionaries who had done so much. A sense of inferiority complex also grew among certain Khasis of the superior civilisation of the western world. There was an urge and longing to be associated with education and look dignified and cultured. The orthodox Khasis felt left out both by the English and by the Christian Khasis and to reach out to Sylhet and other places for education. Their efforts in this direction did not bear much fruit. There was the case of Homiwell who in 1896, went to Calcutta for higher education. The Hindus refused to let him be a student and the Christians boycotted him as a Hindu. Ultimately, in order to complete his education, he became a convert and accepted Christianity. He became a doctor in medicine in 1904. A writer, he wrote a book on the history of Khasi history.

Even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, though on the one hand, assimilation was taking place, on the other the orthodox and Christian Khasis, still maintained a mutual antagonism remained. The following statement of the late U Jeebon Roy will testify to this. *21st November, 1901*: We talked and came to a decision. The teacher in the Christian school should not halt there as it was 'prohibitive and sinful' to say any words.

*5th December, 1901*: We arrived at Mawmynbar and no Christian would give us place to stay. U Jeebon Roy was an orthodox Khasi, influenced by the missionaries propagated at Cherra and Shillong. He felt that the orthodox Khasis should also be educated. As a result, he started the school at Shillong. His sons were educated in England. While his six sons had Bengali names, his four daughters had Khasi names.

he number of educated Khasis began to i  
 thanks mainly to the efforts of the missi  
 there were more Christian Khasis tha  
 18, two Khasi males passed the B.A. exa  
 tta University. In 1905, six Khasis ha  
 a. Khasi women also began to occupy im  
 iety in their own rights, by virtue of educ  
 was the first female matriculate (around  
 14 (Chyne) was the first graduate (19  
 e was the first lady minister in Assam,  
 adullah around 1937, ten years before  
 ountry. Female literacy began to grow :  
 1932 states that the Khasi women oc  
 in India in the pre-Independence day  
 y. Khasi women began to work increas  
 s, teachers and magistrates.

The following table shows the percentage  
 d Khasi and Jaintia Hills District :

	<i>Year</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>A</i>
ntage of literacy	1901	6.72	
uding the age	1911	6.51	
up 0-4.	1921	9.05	1
	1931	10.94	1
	1941	16.15	2
	1951	22.96	2
	1961	37.15	4
	1971	39.69	4

As noted earlier, the missionaries started  
 er the cause of conversion. Later, the Pre  
 e that no convert should be admitted  
 ut first learning to read, exceptions bein  
 ase of those far too old to learn.<sup>15</sup> Othe  
 orts for spreading education among th  
 ally intelligent, the Khasis have made full  
 a which 100 years of devoted work by the  
 available. Educated Khasis, both wom



## ET OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

elsewhere to work and Khasi lady doctors and health visitors were to be found in many parts. It was largely due to the education by missionaries and the encouragement for leaders in Church organisation that the Khasis began to express their opinions with frankness and developed a new awareness of political, economic and changing times. *Ka Riti* in Khasi does not mean a blind adherence to old antiquated institutions but an adoption of certain decrees and a development of this tribal community by good leadership and efficient administration.<sup>16</sup> The progress of the Khasis is due to the education imparted by the missionaries and excellent leadership as has been noted. Thanks to the good cultural heritage, the sober and hard work of the missionaries and closeness to the seat of power in the valley of Assam, Khasi leadership along with the development of the hill areas brought about a peaceful change in the Khasi Hills and other neighbouring areas of Meghalaya whereas in some other hill areas like Nagaland and Mizoram, violence has been the order of the day. In the Khasi Hills, the role of the Ramakrishna Mission in the propagation of nationalism, and preaching, like the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Thus the Khasis have adopted their own religion and of a much wider education imparted by the missionaries. The status of women and children, as stated by the missionaries, with communication of new ideas and the ability to think themselves independently. The importance of education has not to wane. Children too became more educated, more conscious and well-mannered. For the children of the Khasis were a boon and a major break-through from the primitive and unhygienic lives of their earlier generations. The role and significance of the education imparted by the missionaries in the Khasi Hills can hardly be overemphasized. If the historical accident of the arrival of the Christian Mission had not occurred, the clock of development in the Khasi Hills would be behind the rest of the century and the quality would have been much poorer and thus far less too.

charge is often levelled in the country the  
 areas, the foreign missionaries, through  
 ted by them, alienated the tribals from th  
 a culture and slowed down the prog  
 ation. The charge sounds unfair when s  
 d. The missionaries were from a fore  
 each a foreign religion. In preparing  
 ure and in teaching in the schools, the  
 their own culture, civilisation and child  
 ranslated their own literature, depicting  
 oreign land than that nearer the hills. If  
 one to work in those days, they would ha  
 ng upon Indian literature and examples.  
 arly period of missionary work in the Kha  
 of Indian nationalism in the modern fo  
 ed. In fact, in these distant lands, the ecl  
 e approaching Independence were not  
 or two black sheep among the later day  
 indulged, in some other parts of the north  
 cking against the interests of the count  
 of missionaries as a class was humani  
 s have yielded positive results for the nati  
 Another criticism against the missionary  
 n is that it did not foster or provide an  
 ce education resulting in imbalance, with r  
 anities. It is true that the youth of Khasi  
 e of the hill areas in north east India, show  
 umanities, rather than science subjects. I  
 the new found written literature promote  
 fferent forms of expression and this was f  
 rocesses of the Church, such as Sunday s  
 cal church elders, etc. To this extent, sci  
 vely receded into the background. Abs  
 al climate could also have led to a lac  
 ce. But, so was the case in many oth  
 abroad where traditional subjects in hum  
 e graduate higher status and better plume  
 ce education.

## Literature

The impact of the missionary on Khasi society is reflected in the new literature; it mirrors the ethno-cultural change. Bareh tells us that according to tradition the Khasi Script was lost during an incendiary attack. Another story states that it was lost in a flood.<sup>1</sup> They did not have their own script, the Khasis in the past took notes from their neighbours—Bengali, Assamese, Persian and English—keeping records. The present Khasi alphabet, as we note of, was derived from the Roman script introduced as late as 1841. It was then that the Khasi script was born.

Thomas Jones deserves the title of the father of Khasi literature. He gave a script to a hitherto spoken language and printed the first books in Khasi. The missionaries who followed him also produced literature, mainly for use in the churches and schools. As the aim was to spread Christianity, the early Khasi literature was mostly religious. Rev. William and Mrs Lewis who came to Jaintia in 1843, stayed here for 18 years and left for England in 1861. During these early and uncertain years, they introduced the Khasi script into Khasi, and their contribution can not be overestimated. William Lewis translated the New Testament into Khasi, some Gospels and Books of the Bible. The first printed copies of the latter arrived in 1861, and people flocked in crowds singing hymns in thanksgiving to meet the first consignment. The later years saw the publication of a Khasi Bible (1861), completion of the Translation of the Bible (1861), Shakespeare and a series of 'Khasi readers' for school use. Ethical lessons such as Khasi *phawars* (oral traditions) and traditional lines during the bone-burial ceremonies, bear hunt, taking of enemy heads, etc. were also made to publish the character of the Khasi language such as the vocabulary, syntax and idioms.

In 1889, the first periodical in the Khasi language was published, and around this time began the growth of modern Khasi literature.<sup>20</sup> In 1895 a non-missionary

hly, *U Khasi Mynra* was started by Hormi. Its articles of current interest were published in an epitomised anti-missionary, or rather in opposition to the prevailing Christian trends. Some of the responsible for cultural awakening were Jeel, Berry, Rabon Singh, and Sib Charan Roy. They possessed playlets but no original drama was created. The first historical work of the Khasis, *Ka Ri Khasi* by B.K. Sarma Roy was published in an outline of modern history in Khasi. Much was learned from *Cherrapunjee*, and it was the *Cherrapunjee* adopted for the writing of Khasi in the thirteenth place is also noted for its refined moral and religious of native traditions.

Journalism also grew steadily. Journals started by missionaries expressed views counter to those of the started by Christian missionaries. Hormi's magazines were powerful vehicles of Khasi literature. Many journals are many.

The third phase of modern Khasi literature began in 1940. During these years, cultural reorientation; eminent writers were Homiwei Lyngdoh, G. Costa, H. Elias, T. Cajee and the Thams. They wrote on a variety of subjects. In 1926, the first novel, a translation from the *Tharak U Alladin*, was published. The first Khasi novel, *Bareh*. In 1924, an adaptation of the first novel. In 1928, M. Bareh also published the first Grammar, D.N.S. Wahlang published the first studies—a model English Translation of the Khasi Primer.

The *Seng Khasi*, a cultural organisation, published the first non-Christian song-book. The first poem by Radhon. Soso Tham wrote on love, past and philosophy; among his poems, *Ki Hynniew* is a classic.

Themes such as patriotism, religion, origin of Khasi culture and poetry were incorporated in the literature. In the contemporary Khasi literature, in 1941, many text-books and new journals

cts were published. Drama, folk tales and a literature e.g. educational articles and evoked much interest. Among many el a taste for Western literature popularise Renderings from English classics are mar there grew a pride in the indigenous K ndian literature. The last was due to the n missionaries.

Khasi is a living language and has inexhaust dialectical variation is immense and yet mo simulate words, technical terms, idioms, etc cts into the *Cherra* form of speech—a c missionaries and educationists did good *Cherra* dialect the medium of instruction ceeful and effective dialect and has the p and assimilation.

n sum, the impact of the missionary on wo-fold: it introduced the Khasis to Ch precepts and western literature; on the on, it also awakened the patriotic fervour the Khasi world-view in its different aspe iting for the first time. Another feeling g to a nation—the history of India ancient epics were translated. Thus, for th is were required to think beyond their are ince the writing of Khasi in the first quart n Bengali alphabet, there has been a phe e Khasi literature. There now exists a dev e language. It is evident that under the ology and secularism language will play a ringing cohesion and change in tribal Chaudhari.<sup>21</sup> The extensive literature th i is both religious and secular, and it ov l growth to missionary efforts.

## ation

Although drinking was forbidden and tem bristianity, Khasi *Niam* and Hinduism, l earlier, were habitual drinkers. In ch abstention from liquor was made

ership. But, the vast number of stills and the liquor could be obtained were a contribution to the Christian community and caused.

Christian missionaries condemned gambling and also said that it was a sin to earn one's living. Despite this, gambling was very popular. As a rule, women did not gamble. Playing cards and card games spread to the Khasi. *Housie* (housie) was popular in clubs. *Far* in Shillong but it was stopped ten years ago (betting on archery, the game of the Khasi). *Far* in Shillong but it led to an acute law and although banned a few years ago, it continued in form. On market days too, men relaxed and archery still remained the game of the Khasis. Its popularity waned. In certain areas, games were displayed and there were regular archery competitions either weekly or fortnightly. In certain areas, cash prizes were performed. Sentimentality is characteristic about most orthodox Christians (possibly, a Deputy Commissioner) and an informant's aged father. Once, a *Syiem*, the ruler, invited the dignitary for hunting. He said that the ruler carried only two arrows. When the host, the latter replied, 'I must try my first attempt. Otherwise, the second arrow will miss the target. And truly, the animal was killed with the first arrow.'

Hunting was much liked in some villages. In some part of the *Lyngnam* areas, it was not only a sport but an occupation. In the interior, the people used earlier weapons. The well-to-do Khasis used guns. Fishing remained popular but more as a sport. The common way was to poison small fish that stupefied fishes. Traps, nets and fish were used. Later, under the influence of western missionaries and other Europeans in and around Shillong, fishing with the line became a favourite sport. Many other western games viz. cricket, football,

the popular. In the interior, ring-tennis o  
ing were also played by girls. Among  
m, Ludo, Snakes and Ladders were popul  
lock-fighting became a game of the pa  
ger male section of a few villages. The Ch  
s being an out-of-date native sport. The  
a of the people later on made them shy of  
sports

since villagers had little time for leisure, c  
few in rural areas. The touring cinema  
ries and Block Development Officers) was  
first film was shown in the Khasi Hills  
ng has now six cinema houses and both H  
are liked. The drama also now became  
er *Jatra* parties (cultural drama troupes)  
i Hills from Sylhet and dramas or playlets  
arly. In the Khasi Hills around 1925, sta  
ets became an annual feature. New themes  
adopted from Bengali and Western dra  
i drama is on the life of U Tirot Singh, a

### ic, Dancing and Art

The impact of missionaries in the sphere  
r and revolutionary in magnitude. W  
ivilisation which came with the missiona  
ry and a half, shaped the Khasi musical  
ng the Christians who formed a substantial  
lation. As a consequence, musical com  
missionary period leaned towards a W  
in form and melody but in harmony a  
It came to stay as a popular school of mu  
e taught and assimilated mainly through  
urches. For this, the missionaries produc  
ern hymns in Khasi and added notations  
sang these hymns in unison in the ch  
e false note. Earlier, Khasi songs had a  
, themes of love, devotion and joy were  
was the influence of western and eastern  
ast century, the Welsh Mission imparted  
inging on solfa notations while the I

had a good number of musicians and poets. In view of the growing popularity of music and musical arts among the Khasis it was expressed by many that the original songs were fast disappearing. The Khasis, like most tribals, are good at picking up melodies. A few Khasis, under the influence of Bengalis, Assamese and Hindi films and records, have picked up Indian music. Devotional songs are sung at meetings in the villages of *Shella* and *Assamese* songs and *Rabindra Sangeet* were popular among Khasis who have cultivated Indian music. The Khasis had no solo dancing, their dances were group dances and most of these were religious. The influence of Western culture, ball-room dancing, was not popular among the Christian Khasis. Some young Khasis took a fancy for Indian dancing too. There was no particular liking for sculpture and painting among the Khasis in this period.

### Crime and Crime

Despite the sober influence of missionaries there was an increase in the incidence of crime, indicating that crime had multiplied. Human sacrifices persisted only till 1850 onwards and have not disappeared. Instances have been cited of human sacrifice as late as 1932. A couple of years ago, in the very village of *U Thlen*, a child was kidnapped and it was suspected that he was offered as a victim to the Serpent-master *U Thlen*. A Khasi from the *Lyngnam* area mentioned that he had seen a man murdered and the manner indicated that he had been offered to be a sacrifice to *U Thlen*.

### Villages

In early days, Khasi villages were scattered on hill-tops, these varied in size. Some villages ranged from three to four hundred people. There was a significant growth in the number of villages. Villages near urban areas or in places like *Cherrapunji* and *Jaintia* made apt instances *viz.* *Cherrapunji* and *Jaintia* other places villages were grouped in



appearance was one big village with large dots within it. As a contrast, smaller villages had only two or three houses. Bigger villages grew. While few villages had grown three or four times, others grew twice-fold; by contrast, those that grew. Some rural areas grew because of missionaries which attracted more residents. *Ingkhlaw*, *Kharang* too grew partially because of the Unitarian missionary, Marguerite. These stood to gain on account of Government work that was earlier done by missionaries. Development started under the community development programme and *Lyngnam* areas were, comparatively, where any new village sprang up. There was no growth but by small paths. Earlier, the villages were with stockades, deep ditches and massive walls. Hill sides were thickly-studded with sharp stakes driven in the ground. Later, most villages had gates at the entrance and there were many shops in them. Small tea shops, bakeries, carpenter shops, shops selling ready-made garments were common and, in some progressive villages, co-operative societies sprung anew. A village man, a young Khasi man as the secretary of the club, spoke fluently and had many ambitious projects. The spirit of cooperation ultimately meant a spirit of unity prevailed in the larger *ing* or the *kpoh*. The first member was born in the larger *ing* or *kpoh* and was engaged to the cultural club as a matter of course. They were grouped together because of certain common interests. Earlier Christian villages had churches built in the centre. In this section in many villages stayed apart. In these areas acquired names indicating Christian influence. *Mairang* village, the area where the Christians were known as Mission *Mairang*. *Cherra* village had a church. In *Jaiaw*, near Shillong, most of the houses were owned by the Christians. Owing to greater improved methods of communication and transportation, there was a greater horizontal and vertical spread of population, a point made before. Owing

action, stratification in Khasi society was e. The surprisingly great and complex change over the last fifty years effected changes. In many villages, the very composition through geographical and social mobility, spread of education and urban influence. Village endogamy pattern among the Khasis. When there was either because the individual migrated, or Memorial stones were no longer built as in the past. Missionaries retained the earlier Khasi names of villages. These begin with *Um*, *Lait*, *Soh* and *Maw* or *shnong*.

The development of the Upland Khasi region after the establishment of the State administrative system in 1874. Since then, the features of the region have changed greatly. Shillong, once a tiny hamlet, 'in the light of history,'<sup>22</sup> is now a busy, modern town. Khasi elite reside, mixing with various other groups of interest and occupations.

Culturally, a marked difference was seen between the villagers at this juncture. Bareh observed that the interior who adopted Christianity were more civilised than the non-Christians and were better than the latter and had an aim to improve them.<sup>23</sup> Gurdon too commented on the progress of the Khasis owing to the efforts of the missionaries. He noted the Welsh missionaries have done and continue to do good amongst these people. 'It would be a pity to see the Khasis,' he writes around 1914, 'if it were possible to arrest the progress of the mission work.' He adds that the Khasis converted to Christianity with much earnestness, as was evidenced by the large number of converts.<sup>24</sup>

### Education

The education imparted by the missionaries was a great help to the living too. Bareh notes that the houses of the Christians are far superior, especially where the European missionaries.<sup>25</sup> A marked change in the social life became visible a fact evident during my time.

houses were oval-shaped, low, thatch-roofed with walls of stone, roofs of corrugated iron, windows and chimneys to let out smoke, etc. The present houses called 'Assam type' have walls made of bamboo mats or reeds with corrugated iron roofs after the devastating earthquake of 1897. The old structures were destroyed. Japanese experts invited by the British Government to study the region mentions that around 1914, European missionaries changed the architecture of the Khasis especially in Jaintia, Jorhat, Cherrapunjee, and Shillong.<sup>27</sup> Some houses had corrugated iron, glass windows and chimneys. Earlier houses had one small opening resembling a chimney. If there was no chimney, the smoke had to find its way out as it could. A definite change here is noticeable. One who would at once recognise that in many villages houses were not made now in the traditional manner of a gable with low roof, on store stilts, with a central room for living and cooking. This change in the manner of houses with air circulation, ventilation, etc. could be explained as a manifestation of modern civilisation. But it would not give the picture of a new innovation was no doubt adopted through the influence of skill in carpentry and the Christian workers. The very concept of housing and living changed due to the influence of Christian missionaries. For them utility alone but beauty too became the criterion. Windows made more light and air possible. Space was given for every household task such as cooking, washing, etc. Domestic animals were kept in a separate enclosure. An elementary system of sewage was introduced to carry away the waste. The space around the houses was used to grow vegetables and flowers. Houses began to be built with a little opening in it that served as a chimney. Christian houses stood distinct from the other houses; they were neater and better in appearance. The Christian influence was also visible in the way they furnished the house. With reference to the furniture and utensils too, Christian civilisation has left its mark. The houses of even affluent Khasis were spacious and well-furnished.

bamboo mats and stools, earthen and, due to Christian influence, more household items were equipped the houses of the wealthy. There were iron beds, cupboards, chairs, almirahs, and other things of the well-to-do Khasis. The kitchen was equipped with jars, cutlery and other vessels to store food. These were commonly used by both Christians and non-Christians. But, their use was restricted to the serving of food; meals were normally served on bamboo mats. Houses of Christians were better equipped than those of non-Christians. With picture frames, flower pots, and small flowering plants, bushes and trees, the houses also reflected more taste.

### House-warming Ceremonies

Earlier ceremonies connected with house-warming were observed on a much smaller scale initially and were gradually passed by, both by rural and urban Khasis. The site for the house was chosen by the village headman according to the needs of the man. If a small hut was to be built, the man got ready the materials required and the villagers helped him build it. Most Christians, however, did not, as in the early days, break an earthen pot. It would be lucky or not. The houses of Christians were built by hired labour. When the beams of the house were up and the roof was ready to be built, there was a feast by one who had helped in the building of the house. The feast, which was held by all sections of the village, was followed by merry-making on the night before the house was completed. There was dancing, eating and drinking. The merry-making continued till dawn. The merry-making was continued for hours of the morning. These ceremonies were gradually observed in the *Bhoi* and *Lyngnam* areas, which were comparatively backward.

Earlier, a person could build only one house. But now people could own a number of houses. This was due to the phenomenon of Shillong in particular. Whoever shifted to Shillong had a house-warming system according to the custom of the Khasis.

## Communications

Phenomenal growth of the Khasi Hills, of led to improvement of communications grew on a large scale and the bullock-cart, pony or mule cart drawing pikes of heavy nature. Although porters still carry loads of heavy goods, a number of vehicles also ply on the road.

## Peace and Warfare

Internal warfare ceased completely and martial law became obsolete.

## Economy

Khasi economy and industry changed very much, due to the efforts of the missionaries. Government too. David Scott, agent to the Government of North-East Frontier Region during the British period (called Iskat Sahib by the Bengalis), gave a new impetus to the Khasis. He introduced the cultivation of wheat, beets and cabbages. These crops changed the culture and economy also, the diet and the dress to some extent. A superior quality of produce—cows, pigs, cocks, fowls, geese, and the breeding of cattle with Holstein-Freisian bulls, came to the Khasi Hills long ago and it is in these hills that the best bred cattle of the entire north-east India are now bred. As weaving declined in the face of stiff competition from the markets in the plains. The missionaries introduced spinning, baking and printing. In many places schools were opened by them for imparting training in various trades, such as leather goods and curing of leather for shoes, etc. Formal centres were opened by the missionaries for imparting academic and vocational training and for the advancement of education. These institutions gradually and helped the spread of vocational education among greater numbers.

Change was also noticeable in Khasi agriculture. The contribution has been mentioned elsewhere. Some of the crops were grown in the Khasi Hills; some of the crops were introduced by the missionaries. Others were developed by the Khasis.

ernment and the initiative of private individuals. New crops grown were soya beans, (*Glycine max*), (*Phaseolus esculenta*), etc. The earlier method (slash and burn) slowly receded and were replaced by rice cultivation which became popular. In the early years there were attempts at permanent cultivation of vegetables, etc. The hoe and the sickle were still used but the plough was also used in certain areas and certain villages of *Shella* area. The Government taught modern techniques in agriculture and encouraged the use of pesticides and fertilizers. The Agriculture Department also provided grants to the farmers to clear the paddy fields to impound and store rain water. In 1956, the State Government offered a loan for renovation of the orange gardens. The slash and burn method is still only in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, among other regions. In this region, has the old *Jhum* (slash and burn) method been replaced to a great extent by permanent cultivation. With the British annexation of the earlier independent States, some villages e.g. *Tyrna* came under the control of the British who installed a headman of each village as the administrative head. Villages were grouped as British villages. In these, the cultivators paid a tax of one to four per house to the British. Since in the early days, no tax was paid to the District Council. No tax was levied on the land instead.

Rudimentary arts and crafts such as iron smithy and the plaiting of wicker baskets were still practised by the Khasi housewife to supplement her income on her household needs. On the average, one or two baskets could be made in one day. The number of iron goods increased as cheaper iron goods were available from the British trade, the Khasis allege, was suppressed by the British. In the early days the trade of the Khasis with the Chinese, was, for the most part, trade by barter. The means extensive. They took down cotton cloth, iron tools of husbandry manufactured from crude iron, iron smiths, yarns grown on the flank of the hills, and quantities of potato, honey, beeswax, and other goods. They brought back in exchange salt, tobacco

## ACT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

horned cattle, goats, pig, poultry, cotton and other trifling articles. The exports and imports in value and were estimated at about Rs. 10 lakhs, as recorded by Allen, Member Board of Agriculture. As for division of labour, among the Khasis, it is a traditional rule that women engage in trade and markets whether on a large or a small scale. They carry goods from field to market but they are not the actual scene of the selling and buying. The responsibilities on the part of the women are controlled either by the uncle, brother, even the son or in many cases, they form separate domestic families. Control over the trade appears more marked when business is large. Among the Khasis, residence in the village is an indication of economic autonomy. The occupations that came up generally among the poor (not only to some of these) are: porters, carriers, masons, road and house builders, cleaners, money sweepers, etc.

### Property

Earlier, Khasi concept of property included land, silver coins and *sbai* (shells), personal belongings, groves, paddy fields, cattle, poultry, household equipments—tools, weapons, etc. The introduction of money had no impact on this concept. After the introduction of paper money too. So, cash incomes were kept in the bank. As the Khasi men's own rights and women became increasingly independent, authority of the maternal uncle diminished. The hold of the clan on landed properties weakened.

Growth of industries led to the indiscriminate cutting of trees and there was destruction of forests that threatened the environment. These offences are dealt with by the law. Due to the influence of Christianity, and the opening of schools which led to more openings by way of education, converts, ideas began to change. Most disputes were settled in accordance with earlier customs. The growing belief was that conversion was

re, in the right of inheritance to any kind of property. Christianity, Hinduism or Islam have had no effect on the Khasi law relating to property or inheritance. There was no provision for adopting a male. If there was adoption, it was always a female who had to be adopted. The religions have made no impact on the law of inheritance. But, a new tendency was that when a man died, he had the right to give it to his son. Before, no one as such could claim it. The law was changed, for the right to make wills regarding property. Two new changes in Khasi law relating to inheritance, that sons now could be given a fair share and daughters too were treated in a just manner. The law was not as handicapped as it was before except where it was necessary for the performance of religious rites. Earlier, an orthodox Khasi marrying a Christian lost the right to inherit property.

Missionary impact is reflected in Khasi law. The law of inheritance remained the same viz. that rights and obligations, and conversely that obligations from rights, there were some changes owing to the fact that members of the family were converts, and the law was not orthodox. Also, marriages between Christians and Khasis led, ultimately, to a settlement of disputes which was biased against the converts and the problem has been mentioned in brief before. Converts lost their rights to property, or their social rights in performing religious rites. But, owing to the religious tolerance of the Khasis and their good sense prevailing, as also the fact that converts and orthodox Khasis, belonged to the same community, customs grew and there were mutual adjustments. These customs became so powerful and widespread that they were incorporated in Khasi law. At present, the same rules of inheritance as the orthodox Khasis. In suit No 41 of 1833, a *Synteng* case, the District Commissioner said, 'There is evidence that conversion to Christianity separated a man from his community and he was outcasted; he can succeed to no property.'



ives. Property that he would be entitled to  
n.' This hostility ceased after some years  
allowed by social custom to inherit from  
ng 1916-1918, there arose in one case  
ession of a Christian *Khadduh*. It was th  
a *Khadduh* became a convert, she should  
at share in the property which accrued to  
e family's religion, and not the entire  
eneral, the division of property by the mot  
and religious toleration of the Khasis are  
y of cases in the Courts.

Earlier, in a sense, the position of the Khasi  
ck legal personality, although, it has been s  
t was not so. Later, the legal position of th  
s the same. The Khasis, were, at this stage  
nsitional period of maternal-paternal de  
s of Khasi women with non-Khasis comp  
m of inheritance. The children of a K  
le to inherit the property of the former  
rules, the property of the non-Khasi husb  
ferrable to the children. If a man abando  
his children or left her a widow, she wo  
their shares from her share according to K  
ne other hand, the man took up the u  
ren, they would grow up to be non-Kh  
ding to his custom.

### Political Set-Up

n the later Khasi society, the earlier politic  
is underwent minor yet significant vari  
ription of the early and recent political  
y, the following words have been use  
ving ideas:

*Tribe*: A politically or socially coherent  
occupying or claiming a particular territo

*Yiemship*: Office of the ruler or chieftain.

*Nima*: The State.

*Ka Riti*: The unwritten constitution  
stitution.

*Durbar*: The political assembly.

The first Anglo-Khasi contact, through the Company, was in the year 1765. After that, the political history of this area was the Treaty of Yandabo (1826), by which Burma surrendered the province to the British. In 1829, there was an uprising of the Khasis, the good work being carried on by the British in the valley and Sylhet, which was caused by the harshness towards foreign domination. The British military at Nongkhlaw, their false promises and the treatment of the poor inhabitants, and the completely sapped the civil sense of the Khasis to lose confidence in the good work. In 1829, U Tirot Singh made detailed plans for the country. He abdicated his crown in favour of Singh Manick. In 1830, the British rule was finally endorsed. The Khasis were brutally dealt with by the British. The people were brutally dealt with by the British. David Scott and his friends were greatly impressed by the uprisings and even more impressed by the acts of warfare which underlined the Khasi spirit. Throughout the period, the Khasis showed an unflinching spirit. In April 1833, the battles were waning and there was a breathe an air of peace. The Khasis, though not democracy were vigilant even after the British imposed any terms that were illegally imposed. In this year, Tirot Singh, the rebel leader, was killed and the uprisings quelled, after four years. He was taken prisoner and died at Dacca. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills were annexed to the British. The ancestral kingdom of the old Shillong was partitioned into *Knyrim* (to the east) and *Shillong*. This led to the diminishing of the friendly relations that had evolved since 1765. In 1864, the capital of the district shifted from Jorhat to Shillong. In 1874, the new province of Assam was created with Shillong as its capital. Around 1880, there was a rise of nationalism among the Khasis. In 1884, the province of Assam with the United Province of Bengal became summer headquarters. The province was again separated in 1912.

## THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

The year 1923 saw the formation of the Khasi State and the years 1934-1935, the Khasi State. Effort by the latter to receive a seat in the Constituent Assembly in India did not prove successful. In 1947, when India became independent, *Syiem* Wyclif wanted the Khasi State to remain independent. Ultimately, the Khasi State joined India. In 1953, under Article 244 and the Constitution of India, District councils were set up in the Khasi areas. In 2 April, 1970, a sub-state of Meghalaya was created and on 21 January, 1972, was born the state of Meghalaya.

Throughout the centuries, the Khasis have maintained their political independence, an opinion which has been held by many. The ancient Khasi rights, privileges and customs of the country have been embodied in many laws and regulations and so made possible for the British to rule. A characteristic feature of the British rule in the Khasi areas now known as Jaintia Hills was the transfer of powers of administration were transferred from the Khasi rulers to the separated from their respective parent Khasi rulers and functions of the Deputy Commissioner and the status of the Khasi native rulers. Previously, there were altogether 25 small Khasi states. Under the new Constitution of India, a District Council was set up (as mentioned earlier), to manage the internal affairs of the tribes, such as, organisation, land rights, education, etc. It was elected by universal adult franchise. It replaced the District Council which had no constitutional or advisory capacity. The new District Council has legislative authority in respect of certain matters provided for in the sixth schedule of the Constitution, articles 244 (2) and 275 (II). The Council has the power to manage any forest not being a reserved forest, to regulate or water causes and jhum cultivation, to regulate village communications, to regulate the trade and commerce, and public health, to fix rules for the succession of chiefs or headmen, to decide the disputes of property and handle marriages and divorces. It is noteworthy that despite the advent of new

District Councils, like the British, had *Chiefs* as an office though powers are in sharp contrast to what happened in the District Council abolished all old chieftains and village councils.

The missionaries had no direct impact on the, yet, there are some changes in the due to the education and democratic by the Christian missionaries, and later, due to the ideas of nationhood by the Rama Krishna movement was prominent in spheres where control by new bodies, the District Councils and schemes by Government. Earlier, much was done by the missionaries, but now, the political complexion. Among others, one of the District Council was to establish schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, and waterways, and in particular the power language and manner in which primary education.

Christian missionaries brought with them science, education and, to some extent of western culture. It has been seen that the societal impact of the missionaries, further, at a superficial level. The influence grew with the years; yet, the factors pulling the society were equally strong. A strong sense of culture and religion persisted and an effort to control the effects of western ideology was made by the missionaries who were from the west. The rule of the British and the general conservatism. Against this new background, the demand for political rights intensified in the Khasi Hills, and the western missionaries also increased. The growth and because of the education imparted by the missionaries, local leadership of a high calibre emerged on a scale. As the demand for political rights increased, misgivings arose in the minds of the British and the Indian public. Stormy debates took place in the country. The demand for political rights in the Khasi Hills because it was peaceful; all Khasis spoke

Meghalaya becoming a full-fledged State, the change in the political set-up disrupted and generated a new thinking process. Since the structure of Khasi society broke up, and education came to have a new dimension in the Khasi

### **Khasi 'Niam'—religious belief and practice**

The *Niam* (religion) of the Khasis had been passed from generation to generation. Missions and all of new religious influences in the society of the Khasis inevitably had their impact on the *Niam*. Cults and rituals had formed important features of Khasi religion. A cult included the collection of beliefs and practices associated with a given deity, e.g. the cult of U Thlen (the serpent man) or the cult of ancestor worship. Rituals involved in the worship of deities included consulting particular persons (magicians or rainmakers) for omens or their symbolic representations. Over the years, the Khasis with missionaries and other religions like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, certain changes in earlier religious beliefs and practices. Some of these changes grew gradually. The more significant changes were direct causes and spread effects from other religions. Due to the influence of Christianity and the missionaries than any other religious influences, Hinduism was marginal while that of Islam was negligible. As religion pervades almost all spheres of human existence, some of the observations below are those made earlier in the chapter under the heading of 'Religion', so, as observations here are presented differently. Informants examined in connection with the study, in the initial 25 years or so, after Christianity arrived in the hills, the mingling between the Christian and the Khasi *Niam* became smoother. Friction lessened. After 25 years or so, it was clear that Christianity had become the Khasi Hills. Christianity was accepted by the Khasis—it was the religion of the rulers and the people. They acquired material benefits. The foreigners, on their part, very gifted, devoted and sincere.

homogeneous nature of the population due to the influence of the missionaries has also led to the decline of some of the old customs. In the Jaintia area, the cult of the *U Thlen* still has a strong hold. Belief in the earlier superstitions, *sang* (ancestral spirits) had declined much more among the educated orthodox; ancestor-worship and the *U Thlen* (covenant of the cock with God) had almost disappeared among the Christians. Yet, in times of crisis, many still offer *Knia* (worship) to ward off the influence of evil spirits. Though belief in divination and divinatory techniques had not vanished totally. Divination is still a common occurrence in every Khasi house and was used for all important matters, e.g. fixing the date of marriages and other important matters. Some rural Christians still retain the old customs. Orthodox and rural Khasis were more conservative than those in *Jutang*. There was no change in the old customs but priests are in lesser demand and their influence has been reduced and priests look elsewhere for new converts. The opinion of liberal orthodox informants was that originally, the Khasis were hostile to the foreign religion. As their own religion had ceased to give spiritual satisfaction, the novelty of a new religion preached by the missionaries, engaged to the class of rulers, drew them in its net. As the foreign missionaries were gifted, qualified and soon succeeded in establishing missions. There were no mass conversions except in the Jaintia villages or hamlets and even there, the inhabitants have accepted the religion willingly—out of conviction and not for material benefits, but no force was used. In the Jaintia area, the material advantages accruing from conversions were not the main reason, and because the missionaries stressed the spiritual benefits of *Khasi Niam*, Christianity took roots in the Jaintia area and stayed. The Hindu missionaries had greater success in the Jaintia area, for, the foreign missionaries had painted a dark picture of Hindus. Caste-system, child-marriages, idol-worship, prohibition of the eating of beef, treatment of women, etc. associated with Hinduism in the Jaintia area were very repulsive. Moreover, the resources of the Hindu missionaries were far less than those of their foreign counterparts. The Hindu missionaries lacked the backing of the official machinery.

ama Krishna missionaries did not come of conversion but to spread education and services, and stressed the depth of the thing universal brotherhood, they were w is. Local missionaries were in a sense clo the foreign missionaries were more pa course among the believers of differen g the Khasis was little or none in the people mix more freely; but, the mixing ough beliefs in certain earlier cults have s and ceremonies have been dropped, mo among all Khasis, some superstitions a (*U Thlen*) still hold a grip of some Khasi Christians. A case of kidnapping in the years ago was cited where it was suspected to be a sacrifice to *U Thlen*. Sacr tedly was also still in vogue. Among the of illness, some worship is offered to ated with the sickness. Some Christians, ated bodies. So, their minds are still do i beliefs and the acceptance of Christi Christians do not believe in the *juang* r urban orthodox Khasis Beliefs in divi ed among all Khasis; the nature of pri ged. One informant felt that among m ction about Christianity was genuine; el in strength, even after foreign rulers ha eeling was that Christianity removed m *angs* by rationalisation. They noted th u influence, Khasi religion became p stic; originally, it was monotheistic. In s is influenced by Hinduism began to worsh ar and Lakhi—all Hindu deities.<sup>29</sup>

The Christian informants said that Christia e Khasi Hills because of its superiority, a iques, patience, perseverance and benevo f the foreign missionaries. The initial hos ent sects had died down, but the mixi ers of different faiths was still outward. M were superior in every way to orthodox K

called by some Christians 'Pagans' and 'I said that Christians did not believe in... tian missionaries were responsible for dis... had given up ancestor worship and other... hood among the Khasis, they said unit... e of priesthood among the Khasis had n... Khasis were going to priests and on... result, priests were opting for different... ing on Hinduism, they said that the Vaishn... onaries as such but some Khasis had volu... was now a dead sect. The Brahmo impa... The Rama Krishna Mission had done g... i Hills by preaching a secular outlook an... of nationhood, but its resources and wo... nsidered on par with those of the west... nfluence of Hinduism among the Khasis i... restricted to *Shella, Cherra, Sohbarpunjee* to Shillong.

A majority of the Presbyterians examined... pts have been made by some orthodox K... olics to revive certain cults in simplifi... perstitions, witchcrafts, *sang*, black magic... died down among the Christians and... odox Khasis. This was due to the painstaking missionaries who also trained local n... admitted that in some areas, poor an... believe in these. They said that beliefs in... disappeared among Christians, educa... odox Khasis. But, some Christians still... e occasions, e.g. fixing a date for a marriag... ulty, to trace its cause. Even though cult... ng Christians, some did practice a few cu... ck for thanksgiving or propitiation of th... that many Christians did believe in b... ery but these things were unmentionable in... was argued that such practices helped... no-dynamic equilibrium and self-confic... that many Christians had not heard... stors—*Ka Iawbei, U Thawlang* and *U Siaw*... d of them, and respected them but did n...



younger generation of Christian Khasis orthodox Khasis and most of the inhabitants of *ynghnam* areas, notably inhabitants of villages. This population, had not even heard of such customs. Funeral ceremonies had been given up entirely; even among the orthodox Khasis, the custom was no longer observed. Erection of memorial stones had been given up entirely. Very few families of orthodox Khasis kept the bones of members of the family in a cromlech. They felt that this was the relic of a primitive race, while others said that this was the relic of a primitive race. Members of the *Kur* (clan) had to migrate to other places for certain vocations; and keeping the bones of the dead proved difficult and expensive. Some of the customs in *sangs* had lessened, those to be observed by the women and their husbands were still observed by Christians. All the Presbyterian informants considered the custom to be a sacrifice to the teaching of the missionaries, but the practice of polygamy and concubinage were on the increase. The dances, they felt, were more frequent among the Khasis.

The Catholics asserted that there were no differences in their religion and the religion of the Khasis. Theism, concept of a saviour, the belief of heaven and the concept of heaven and hell. Some of the Catholic missionaries did not object to Khasi customs (as dancing) not opposed to Christianity. All informants felt that the custom of polygamy was greater and hence the assimilation of Christianity had immense effect on the Khasis. They said that it had led to the unity to marriage among all sects of the Khasis. The discipline and nationality; under their influence the Khasis discarded some of the earlier religious customs and preserving of the placenta, for instance. According to them, belief in many gods had gone down. The case is reported in *Nongstoin* that the Khasis had spikes and the manner indicated that he had sacrificed to the serpent monster *U Thlen*.

## IMPACT OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

Progressive orthodox Khasis did not completely reject, but, they did not totally give up consultative and divinationary techniques. They added that in rural interior, especially in areas near *Cherrapunji* -centres of Khasi culture, such methods were still used to and with pride. Rural Khasis, both orthodox, and a large proportion of Catholics, still practice divination, some through their matrikin. In the *nam* areas, owing to the economic backwardness, no religion is followed by the Khasi inhabitants, more so in villages having a heterogeneous population. Believers of the Church of God said that superstitions have declined in every way owing to the arrival of missionaries. They said that the culture shock experienced by followers of Hinduism and Khasi religion has led to a difficult and negligible assimilation. The superstitions such as not building a house facing a certain direction, or insistence on building houses facing a certain direction, or down among Christian and urban, etc., superstitions, such as belief in evil spirits, or attributing misfortune to angry deities have declined considerably even among Christians. Most believers still believe in techniques of divination. Most of the superstitions have died down among Christians and orthodox Khasis. Owing to economic reasons, the members of the family in modern times, make it difficult for members to get together for the performance of rituals. Informants said that Christianity had succeeded in the Khasi Hills because it laid emphasis on material rather than spiritual needs, unlike Hinduism. They said that if material gains had been the only motive for the spread of Christianity in the Khasi Hills, why would it have gained strength in the present climate when there is no foreign aid and Government was taking up the welfare of the people increasingly? They also said that most superstitions have died down among all sections of the Khasis and this is mainly due to the influence of missionaries who introduced a sense of order and austerity and introduced an element of discipline in religious matters.

A majority of the Seventh Day Adventists also said that Christianity had succeeded in the Khasi Hills because it laid emphasis on material rather than spiritual needs, unlike Hinduism. They also said that most superstitions have died down among all sections of the Khasis and this is mainly due to the influence of missionaries who introduced a sense of order and austerity and introduced an element of discipline in religious matters.

many of the earlier religious practices have been abandoned by most Christians and many orthodox Khasis, especially those who are well-to-do and belonging to affluent families.

Funeral ceremonies, for instance, were not observed by most Khasis. Very few orthodox Khasis kept the dead members of the clan in the family cromlech. This was the result of Christian influence. Belief in divination was still prevalent among almost all Christian and orthodox Khasis. But, in rural areas, especially in areas around *Cherra* and *Cherrapunji*, these practices were still observed openly. They felt that missionaries were more devoted to their work. One missionary remarked that even the maintenance of churches was better in the earlier days, and added that this was due to the personal supervision of the missionaries. He said, 'The missionaries, example draws.'

Christian devotees of the Rama Krishna movement, among the orthodox Khasis, funeral practices were still observed due to Christian influence but partly due to the scarcity of funds and changing times when men were engaged in different vocations and the cost of such practices had become difficult and expensive. They said that the Christians, some religious belief and superstitions were still observed totally or partially. And yet, many Catholics, resorted to divination in times of trouble. In such cases, their matrikin performed divination on their behalf. Essentially, acculturation among the Khasis had not changed much. The frequency of religious practices had reduced. The frequency of religious practices was less and priests were taking to other vocations. They said that although they did not believe in the covenant of the cock with God, they respected the covenant of the orthodox Khasi religious belief. Another reason for their respecting the covenant was that it was a religious belief handed down by their ancestors. In their opinion that foreign missionaries were honest and were people with integrity and that many Khasis were not to be status symbols as they belonged to the lower class; hence, whatever they said was accepted. One missionary said that the missionaries both western and eastern.

dimension to the Khasi ethos and made it more dignified.

Muslim informants said that no attempt was made to convert the Khasis to Islam as those to preach Hinduism. In 99% of Khasi-Muslim alliances, the Khasi retained Islam and ceased to be a Khasi. Ornaments and customs retained by him or her and the children were those of the Khasis. Thus, there was no assimilation whatever into Islam. They said that earlier Khasis were not observed by Christians or urban orthodox. The changes given were the change in religious practices, contact with Christianity and Hinduism and the change in life with its impersonality, the high cost of living and the distance separating family members. They said that Christian, orthodox and Hindu Khasis are united by a common feeling of distinctness had remained. The effect of the approach of the foreign missionaries was not observed by informants. They had not heard of any change in customs.

A few non-Khasis questioned, said that among Christians and among Christians, cults had disappeared. Cults depending on the beliefs and finances of the community, e.g., funeral, naming, etc., had disappeared in certain forms. Harvest and fertility cults were still practised in the *Bhoi* and *Lyngnam* areas. Christians (more among Catholics than Protestants) were making attempts to revive certain cults. They felt that divination had increased among rural Khasis. They said that the *U Thlen* cult was practised even among Christians. They also said that although the foreign and Indian missionaries were equally gifted and painstaking, the discipline of the Christian Khasi society was better when the missionaries were there. No force or coercion had been used by the foreign missionaries.

Since religious beliefs and practices vary widely, the Khasi society at present is in a transitional state. The influence of alien religions on Khasi society is not yet clear. Yet, the data available is enough to lead to certain conclusions.

All sections of the Khasis feel that the Khasi society has to be examined more deeply than before.

ted as doctrines rigidly, as in the early days. Such as elaborate ceremonies, whether the marriage or funeral have been much simplified and the present Khasi religious thinking may not be elaborate. If the nuclear family of society and not the large *ing*, *kpoh*, of the younger generation of Khasis know lesser about their ancestors, perhaps the very basis of the religion may be removed. Or, the ancestor worship may be, for with the scattering of members of the tribe the observance of elaborate and traditional rites is increasingly difficult. Certain other religious practices are also dying down; the two methods of divination, the earlier five or six, are by breaking a cock; depending on the seriousness of the ailment, means available. With fewer priests available, the use of eggs in the Khasi diet, and with changing social conditions, the practice may die down although in isolated rural areas it is still strong. The nature of priesthood among the Khasis has not changed. But fewer people now approach the priests for consultations; hence, priests too, are fewer. The importance of the groups on the Khasi *Niam* is indicated.

## General

Beginning from the arrival of the first foreign missionaries in the present day, the Khasi society has undergone many changes in many ways. From a near static society, it has become dynamic in a state of flux with its dynamics interacting with the social and penetrating changes that have been taking place in the process of developing in the Khasi society. The main cause and catalyst has been the work of the Christian missionaries, as also that of the Ramakrishna Mission. Cultural changes occur in any society due to various socio-economic causes entering the evolution of the society. There are completely isolated and cloistered societies, but in a changing society, after a period of time, no one can claim to assess the changing depth and extent of the changes. Thus, in the process of evolution of the Khasi society, reactions and resistance thereto, new mosaic patterns are appearing, a kaleidoscopic pattern showing different

the new. Nor is it possible in social and cultural science to measure and to estimate with mathematical precision and accuracy the influence of any factor which any facet might have remained undetected or unmeasured. The frequency of occurrence or influence. However, by going through the various pages of Khasi society, it is possible to see that since the arrival of the missionaries, it is possible to say that missionary influence contributed a major share in the social and cultural developments in the Khasi society. There have been changes in Khasi society and culture, where changes are attributable directly to the missionaries which have acted as a multiplier and spread-effects of missionary influence. These changes hereto are noticed, like ripples from the centre, spreading to the extremities. These changes are interwoven with the changes occasioned by the changing political system, economic changes and form a complex pattern. As N. K. Chatterjee has said, "There is as yet no generalised theory of culture change which enables scholars to predict with reasonable accuracy the degree of change in various aspects of the culture when a change occurs in any one aspect."<sup>30</sup> Quantification is not possible in such a context. Intensive data collection from societies all over the world is required for formulating any theory. A field investigation was carried out for the purpose in 1965 among the Khasis. It was found that approximately 47% of the total Khasi population are Christians...Although Christianity has had a considerable impact on the Khasi education system, it seems to have a minimal effect on the system of inheritance and residence and on the status of the eldest daughter still inherits the largest share of the property among non-Christians and Christians. The matrilineal system is still the dominant pattern among both Christians and non-Christians. It will be noticed from the data given earlier, that the impact of missionary work, mainly Christian, has brought about changes in Khasi society. Education, improvement of standards of living, reduction of ignorance and unfounded superstitions, development of rationality of outlook, and economic growth have been noted. Training of local people in the organisation of the Church, imparted by Christian missionaries has led to improvement of standards of efficiency and productivity. Christianity has introduced rationality

city in Khasi religious beliefs. Hinduism, with its plural outlook and the Ramakrishna Mission's significant contributions; it has helped revive the indigenous religion in the face of increasing secularism and it has developed a secular outlook, modernity.

As compared to Hinduism, Christianity was received in mind more as it was more practical, unified and its missions better organised. It was also the result of the initial advantages of Christian missionaries, such as the backing from the British Government, resources, monopoly in the field of education, material advantages such as land, houses, hospitals to converts, and the like. Hinduism was introduced except in spurts and in the fringe areas. When it came, it suffered from inadequate resources, missions and the paucity of dedicated workers. It began work in an unfriendly climate without the support of authorities and in the teeth of opposition from the established Hinduism. Christianity made an impact because it was not to proselytise but to serve. It chose to work in education, medicine, and social work, and was accepted alike by all sections of the Khasis for its practicality; many Christian leaders are among its leaders. Both Christian and Hindu missionaries have adapted to the Khasi ethos; the Khasis are now more modern, independent and dignified. But for the missionaries, the Khasis might have been exposed to exploitation on a larger scale. And in the absence of the missionaries, the development that the missionaries provided, the development would have been far different.

The drawbacks of missionary work may be the creation of factions among the Khasis, based on different approaches and ideologies. Another criticism of Christian missionary work may be said to be the lack of unity among some Christians of distinctness from the Indian cultural mainstream. As no such development was the content of the education imparted by the foreign missionaries but

cultural environment back at home, which is a considerable evidence, was without any conscious effort on the part of the missionaries to alienate the tribals from their traditional beliefs. However, this feeling of cultural difference is not felt at least among the Khasis due to location of the province here, the economic progress, the social and political awakening. The Khasi society is, for, the Christian and non-Christian Khasis, the same stock and follow the earlier Khasi pattern. In a modernising society, the different factions in the society have only their common interests at heart and this binds the society together. Different opinions have been expressed by the tribal leaders on Christian missionary activities.

The first school has expressed the opinion that the missionaries have done a lot of good to the tribals. J. N. J. Prakasa expressed similar views. Gurdon and other scholars such as Bareh too have said that the missionaries have done immense good to the Khasis. According to them, what was worth preserving, such as social institutions, has been preserved and what deserved destruction has been destroyed (superstitions). Gurdon remarked 'Khasis are very religious. Christians often take to religion with much enthusiasm. It would be an evil day for the Khasis if anything should retard the progress of the mission work in this area. The Christian missionaries have done and continue to do a large amount of good amongst the Khasis. The missionaries who have left this area are remembered for their excellent work. Christianity is gaining in popularity, as evidenced by the increasing number of conversions. This is due to the increasing number of inter-religious marriages. The second school has taken the view that the missionaries have harmed the tribals. Elwin was a member of this school. Majumdar has observed, 'Recently the Khasis have embraced Christianity and the missionaries have introduced a lot of discomfort among them. He also expressed the opinion that missionaries have not shown understanding or even sympathy. The net effect has been to sap the vitality of the Khasi society.'



ism of primitive groups.<sup>33</sup> Roy, Milgrom and others in India have stressed the need for missionary enterprise in tribal areas. Bose has written of Christian missionaries among the Mundas that when the Christian missionaries came, the hold of Munda culture, which had been a secular mode of life, had become feeble through the influence of Hindu landholders; they helped the Mundas to transmit into gifts in case of death of them, through a misdirected zeal for the acquisition of new grants of lands to the famishing Mundas: 'The Mundas felt a new wave of Christian culture the only means of escaping from poverty.'<sup>34</sup> The situation led to a large-scale conversion of the Mundas into Christianity and a wide spread of the Hindu culture among the converts. The Mundas might be continued to be followed, but their outlook and attitude of life of the Mundas has changed. 'The Christian Mundas are not following the former mode of life; and I have even observed Christians holding the view that they form one of the tribes of Israel referred to in the Bible.'<sup>35</sup>

The third school consists of public leaders who did not condemn missionary activities, but rather encouraged conversion.

The attitude of the Government of recent years has been receptive to foreign missionaries. There is no lack of financial aid from foreign countries. Year after year has been granted to some foreign missionaries for their work here for long.

As has been mentioned above, the tribal leaders of the Jharkhand Hills have given the verdict that Christianity has not destroyed their 'tribal self-hood', as is sometimes claimed. 'When we become Christians, we do not get detribalised. Christianity's teaching taking away anything of value from the tribal life is enriching it in many ways. The growth of Christianity in our language is also a definite contribution to the tribal civilisation, but to the enrichment of the tribal life.'<sup>36</sup> Further, the general opinion is

## T OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

ernment are only for the affluent and common man who needs them more. Red tape and speedy implementation of the schemes, missionary help always reaches the needy into the interior and inaccessible places. The missionaries were dedicated people and the results achieved are permanent was the opinion of more informants, of which a majority were orthodox Hindus. A minority among the informants held the opinion that although the missionaries were good yeomen's service in transforming Khasi society, since Government and voluntary bodies are doing the work they can gradually replace the missionaries. To the majority of the informants, the work done by the missionaries in the Khasi Hills is stupendous and the effort necessary. While praising highly the role of the missionaries and the excellent work done by them, the informants feel, that local missionaries are welcome and they are closer to the people.

The charge that missionaries adopted unfair methods is not correct so far as it relates to the Khasi Hills. As pointed out by the data collected in the field, findings are in line with knowledgeable persons and studies conducted as presented in this dissertation. No unfair methods were adopted by the missionaries nor was there any coercion in the matter of proselytisation. The missionary work has been commendably honest and thorough though the main purpose was conversion. Though the main purpose was conversion, the social ethos was definitely affected as any society would have, in any case, been so affected by any social or economic force, perhaps, in the same manner. Ideologies like Marxism or Socialism aim at changing the social ethos. It is also not correct to say as Majumdar that the vitality of the Khasi people has been saprophytic. In fact, the people have been enriched in many ways, especially in other remote areas where neither a missionary has reached effectively. There are no instances, not reported, of individual observations of missionaries against the cause of national integrity. The reaction to the mounting feeling and

ry against British rule and foreign mis-  
 instances which, if at all, would have occurred  
 diate pre- or post-independence period, can  
 meralisation of missionary outlook or work  
 much effect in the Khasi Hills, just as a few  
 ot materially affect a harvest. The will of  
 ain their unique society has been eloquent  
 when he writes that it is a proof of  
 etence of the Khasis that, when greater en-  
 West have throughout the ages come and  
 ain in their hills the freedom of their small  
 e ancient ways and tenets of their race.<sup>37</sup>  
 or about the past quarter of a century,  
 he public, both have evinced much inter-  
 d by the missionaries in the areas where th-  
 sam, of which the Khasi Hills formed a pa-  
 for about the last ten years, there has  
 ening of in-group consciousness among  
 nics in the society of the Khasis, has  
 ed. These forces interact upon and stimu-  
 ctations too have increased. After Inde-  
 n Government adopted several measures  
 of tribal areas and tribal welfare; it has be-  
 Government cannot wear culture-blinder  
 uled tribes are entitled to special benefits  
 l grants, reservation in services and legisla-  
 ade the tribal people more conscious of  
 entity which cuts across religion.  
 Despite the awareness of and the atten-  
 culture, the trend of a large segment of  
 towards Christianity. It is an interest-  
 Independence, the number of converts  
 i society too is more heterogeneous than b-  
 e higher frequency of inter-ethnic marriage  
 tribal society as 'a homogeneous society  
 the people participate in the common life  
 ame way.'<sup>38</sup> The Khasi society now is in a  
 ot as homogeneous in composition, segmen-  
 as in the early days. Earlier, the feeling of  
 arious hill tribes which helped them to ge-

## T OF THE MISSIONARY ON KHASI SOCIETY

of the antagonism against the people of the Khasi culture, and was rapidly strengthened on. The spreading of Christianity, the modernism, and the changed conditions that of modern technology and the popularity of modernism, led to complex views on many matters. The people of Mizoram and Nagaland were clamorous for independence in a large measure, in fact for full autonomy. This led to a great part of unrest, agitation and violence. In the Khasi hills the demand was peaceful. In a sense, the impact of the missionary on the basic and deeprooted Khasi culture was not so great as on the people and the higher exposure the Khasis have to modern ideas than the people of other hill areas. The Khasis are more tolerant and appreciative of fuller integration with the rest of the country. These factors also helped in the gradual assimilation of the missionary and Christian ideas among the Khasis.

The impact of the missionary on Khasi society has been deep, widespread and lasting. It has reshaped the Khasi ethos and introduced in it a new horizon. New horizons were opened to the Khasis due to the missionaries.

## REFERENCES

- The data presented has been collected from field research, information gathered from other sources and bibliographies, and interview schedules.
- See Chap. 4, religious sects among the Khasis.
- I. Bareh, *A Short History of Khasi Literature*, (1967) p. 1.
- A.M. Meerworth, Monograph on Khasis : *The Jaintia, Jaintia and Hill Tribes of Assam* (1919). Guidebook of the Jaintia Hill—Indian Museum, Calcutta, (1919) p. 42.
- I. Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasis*, (1967) pp. 17-218.
- I. Bareh op. cit., (1967) pp. 381-382.
- A.M. Meerworth, op. cit. p. 38.
- Harat Chandra Mitra : "On a recent instance of offering Human Sacrifices to the Snake Deity," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* Vol. 13 (1924) p. 184.
- A note on another instance...Snake Deity *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* Vol. 12 (1932), pp. 184-187.

J.H. Morris, *The History of Our Foreign Missions*,  
*ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

*ibid.*, p. 27.

J. Nongphura, No. 20, (1904) p. 84.

Referring to or addressing a person as the 'father' is  
 common among the early Khasis and this still is  
 common in interior rural areas.

She belonged to the *Phira* Kur but adopted the  
*Phira* Kur. Later, she married a person from Orissa and  
 Mahanti.

J.H. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

H. Bareh, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

H. Bareh, *A Short History of Khasi Literature*, (1967) p. 1.

J.H. Morris, *op. cit.*, (1930) p. 31-32.

*ibid.*, p. 40.

*ibid.*

N.K. Syamchaudhari, 'Anthropology and the tribal  
 Common Perspective for North-East India (1967) p. 1.

C. Nakane, *Khasi and Garo: A Comparative Study of  
 Social Systems*, (Paris) (1967) p. 97.

H. Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*

P.R.T. Gurdon, *The Khasis*, (1914) p. 6.

H. Bareh, *op. cit.*, (1967) p. 30.

*J. Khasi Mynta*, No. 15. *Risaw* 1, 1897.

P.R.T. Gurdon, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Jeng Khasi, *Essays on Khasi Heritage*, (Shillong) (1967) p. 1.

The Khasis called the deities *Bishwakarma*, *Synshak*

Moni Nag, "Effects of Christianity on some aspects of  
 Khasi culture" Anthropological Assoc. 66 Annual Meet--(Washington)

P.R.T. Gurdon *op. cit.*, (1914) p. 6.

D.N. Majumdar, *Races and Cultures of India*, (1957) p. 1.  
*ibid.*, p. vii.

Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Cultural Anthropology*, (1953) p. 1.  
*ibid.*, p. 46.

Group study by Bareh, Pakyntein and six other  
 (1965) p. 48.

N.K. Bose *op. cit.* p. 58.

C.L. Rema, *A Common Perspective for North-East India*  
 (1967) p. 209.

# 6

## Present Khasi Society

With the arrival of the missionaries, a new era in Khasi society. In the still waters, ripples are being sent out. Changes in Khasi society on account of missionary influence are subcultural in nature. Other significant happenings are the transfer of political power in 1947 when India became an independent nation, the Khasi Hills springing into strategic importance, increasing urbanisation, the growth of mass media of communication, and a boost in the economy. Owing to these, the presence of a new dynamic and a greater horizontal and vertical mobility, a chain of social reactions was generated. The emergence of a secular nation and a welfare State, the strengthening and articulate direction. Governmental and voluntary organisations took on increasingly the work done earlier by the missionaries. Local people are increasingly coming into the spheres of activities of foreign organisations. It would thus be relevant to identify the present Khasi society and its possible direction.

The earlier near-static Khasi society underwent a transformation that began invisibly around the year 1813 A.D. The cultural persistence associated with isolationism was being eroded. Basically, the matri-centred Khasi society was being transformed. There were other minor, yet significant changes in culture and civilisation that affected the Khasi

l superstructure. Influx of outsiders in large-scale inter-ethnic marriages have added a further dimension to the changes were pointers to a new direction. It is in such a place where an area becomes the melting-pot of different cultures, the main points to be taken into account are the nature of the changes, the content of culture, the central theme and the economic frame work that sustains them.

The Khasi character has not altered significantly. The Khasis are reluctant to move out, although the scale is larger than before. The Khasi is deeply attached to his land and also to his kin. Experience of strangers and the fact that he belongs to a minority have further aroused a sense of self-consciousness. A Khasi is also too independent to be easily controlled; he will not obey readily. For all his hospitality, he prefers his own surroundings. Though generous and hospitable, a Khasi still shies from strangers. In the villages, men and women respond warily to strangers. When they see a strange face, but they are cautious. When they are convinced of the good intentions of the stranger, they are friendly and hospitable. Perhaps, as many have pointed out, the prejudice made also by Roy-Burman and others, that the Khasi is a thief in their minds is associated with the experience of a trader with whom their experiences were not pleasant.

The change taking place in the present Khasi society is being initiated by foreign missionaries who have come here and all for their pioneer, organised and systematic work for the betterment of Khasis, is not only rapid but also deep. It is affected only 35% of the Khasis; the rest is still in the state of lack of education, hygiene, literacy, and so on. The change in the composition of Khasi society (the Khasi society) is treated in a reserved manner, but the Khasi who adopts Khasi ways and usages he is readily accepted into the Khasi society. A non-Khasi marrying a Khasi woman and adopting Khasi ways of life, is, as in the early days, accepted as a Khasi. The children too get their full status as Khasis. Judgment to this effect was given in the Assam 1958 (Assam 128) in the case of a person of American mother and a Khasi Father.<sup>1</sup> In the

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

ty has retained its earlier flexible outlook. rich and poor Khasis, the educated and uneducated, urbanites and ruralites is not as wide as it is in other parts of the country. There is increasing urbanisation and a demand for white-collared jobs.

Although in the larger perspective, early Khasi society, certain clans did enjoy a special status. The *Mawroh* (clan) were specially known for their purpose of intelligence. But, at present, no special relation exists as between one clan and another. Decisions are chosen by the respective clans.

Two opposite tendencies: an in-group consciousness of belonging to the Khasi community in Khasi society. The elite and those influenced by a wider perspective. For the past few decades, there has been a general awakening of in-group consciousness in north-east India. Some common forms of this are: political awareness, search for identity, revival of traditional culture and resurgence of old values. These have affected only an influential minority. The majority still retains its earlier outlook. Change is feared and avoided, all the more so in the backward *Lyngnam* areas. In these backward areas, the change is not yet pronounced in spite of contact with the outside world. A 12-year old bright-looking girl from a village where industry had sprung up was schooling, if she knew of Shillong and had heard of Shillong but not of Delhi. A peasant woman from the *Lyngnam* area was very fine and she was content with it. In the past, when men have worked and lived, women have shown interest in education and economic independence. In *Mngkot* village, a middle-aged trader-cum-farmer was educating her eldest daughter in Shillong. For a man or a woman taking to a career is now considered as incompatible with the role of mother and homemaker of children. On the contrary, in the Khasi Hills, there are many women working outside. In contrast to the earlier feeling that the man was reigning supreme in the house, there



them to enter another domain.

The broad division of the present Khasis is into two sections—the educated town-dweller and the illiterate. The former show preference for white-collar jobs such as law, medicine and engineering, and business. Among the latter, although the dignified and respected, there, are practically no Khasi gardeners, barbers, sweepers, soldiers and male domestic help. Though the percentage of literacy is high, the benefits of education have not reached well into the interior. The Khasi culture is not as yet very advanced and the contribution in science, music, art, dance or drama has not been very significant. A new awareness or longing for improvement is spreading in the new villages, especially in those which have grown up near towns, or those whose inhabitants have had opportunities to visit other places and imbibe new and progressive ideas. Educated and salaried classes set up their own households. A man and wife, run and manage their own families and educate their children. To that extent, the traditional role of the maternal uncle in his brother's or sister's household is diminishing. The modern modes of living and working are being accepted. A man and his wife should live by themselves. Salaried people find that a man and his wife can better educate their children better if there is no interference from other relatives.

Men and women leave their hearth in search of new homes and start their own families. They live together and their children inherit their property. With education, the opening up of the country, the establishment of communication, and the way of life which has to meet the demands of the modern age, have helped the Khasis to accept and assimilate many changes. The dilemma the Khasi tribal is faced at present is to retain their identity and yet to keep pace with other advanced parts of the country, a dilemma stressed by Mahatma Gandhi as one which all tribals face. Truly, the Khasis will be drawn into the strong current of cultural change and of a general technical advance that is sweeping over the whole country. Their earlier leisurely ways of life

## THE PRESENT KHASI SOCIETY

ed and they must attune themselves to the new standards. In the case of the Khasi too. tribes, the gap that separates them from sophisticated countrymen, particularly the urban, to have narrowed. On the other hand the among the Khasis, who are mostly products of institutions, are of superior calibre and can intelligentsia of other states. There are individuals with exceptional mental and physical abilities for leadership even at the national level. Before, the varied religious sects made inroads on community and the Khasis came to be divided with little communication amongst themselves. Among these sects has improved and a new awareness, of belonging to the same stock, has led to a more united outlook, which however, has yet to fully

### Family

The present Khasi family is still matri-centric. A new dimension has been added to the earlier structure, particularly of the educated and economically advanced men. This is all the more apparent in areas near urbanised areas, and in places with market facilities in the vicinity. A majority of the informants felt that the status bestowed further status on a woman, a recognition that their status remains as before; a minority felt that their status *de facto* has lessened as the woman has gained in importance. Education generates economic independence; economic independence bestows financial freedom. For all these reasons, a man also does not like to depend on his wife's relatives or from his mother.

One informant gave an example to prove his point. The status of women is more or less on par with that of men. It is noted that women are respected but not given the same status as in the early days. A man may now take decisions without consulting his wife and mother, which earlier perhaps he could not. Another informant from *Shella* expressed that men are still respected greatly and that the status of women has been enhanced. Most women now-a-days do not return before starting a meal. A convert *Kh*

daughter) or one living in an urban area finds herself adversely affected as she is no longer the head of the family. In an orthodox Khasi family, a convert does not lose her right to property as before, but so does her position in the family. A situation contrary to the case of the *Khadduh* (orthodox or Christian) in urban areas and voluntarily refused to fulfil her social obligations. The members of the family do not come to her when in distress. While no uniformity exists in this regard in the fabric of Khasi society, it is generally true that in *Khyrim* and *Cherra* areas, nevertheless, the *Khadduh* has greatly retained her traditional position. In these areas, in most cases, the *Khadduh* gets the bulk of the property or at least, the lion's share. For, the concept is based on the concept of justice propagated by the missionaries where all children are treated in a fair manner. The property to all daughters, and in the case of sons, the father bestows gifts on sons also. In most rural orthodox families, earlier customs are followed and more or less the position of a woman is as before. But a new woman to assert herself in every sphere is evincing a change in the *inter se* status of men and women in rural areas.

Parental authority among the Khasis has changed considerably in urban surroundings and in rural families where the father is either too dominant or have no time for the children. The men work during the day and spend the evening hours in gambling or drinking. Life poses new problems for the younger generation. Individuals learn patterns of independence and autonomy from a very early age. Earlier, the family was a large unit and played a crucial role in the life of the individual. Society was kin-oriented. But, the present pattern is different—the unit smaller and individual-oriented. This has brought about a change in the pattern of child-rearing. Individual child-care problems were negligible; an uncle or a brother was always available to discipline the child who offended the local rules. But owing to the changing living conditions and the smaller familial unit, the intimacy among members leads to an intensification of conflict which may magnify and distort conflict and c

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

quarrels and disagreements rather than act independently, and there is friction between the two generations is not enough there is no segregation of sexes in Khasi society as is advocated. In actuality, however, society is permissive. Boys and girls mix freely and the incidence of pregnancy outside wedlock has risen in the past few years.

A situation similar to Poland has arisen in the Khasi family with the gradual weakening of the extended family (and large family group). In Poland, the family has broken up to the fourth degree rather than the nuclear family. The land on which the peasants worked. The family was closely linked to other such groups to which authority was in the hands of the older members and respected by all. Interests centred round the family as an interacting socio-economic group in which each individual was born. In the city, the wife has taken over the role of the house-keeper, leaving the role of the breadwinner to the father of the family. Paternalism, which was common to the Poles, rapidly declined as the children became more and more aware of their new freedom. As the wife started earning, she became increasingly independent. Hence, the transition has not always been as successful as just described.<sup>2</sup> Not seldom did the immigrant, on a salary of the unskilled immigrant force, find himself involved in heavy debts, to rely on charity and to have recourse to drink.

The budget of the average family shows that they spend more than before on food, housing and clothing. As the price index gone up but the standard of living has not. This is more marked in urban areas. Entertainment has increased, further, and among some Khasis, education has become a priority next to food. Entertainment such as visiting friends, cinema-shops, cinema-houses, going out for picnics, etc., has increased on a larger scale than before. Savings have decreased. Little money is spent on marriages or for charity because people can no longer have faith in the former has declined. But, a small amount is donated to the Church and some

unfortunate. Owing to the spiral rise in the cost of living, the poor can spend on luxuries. As between the orthodox Khasis, the former spends more on luxuries and the latter is more frugal, saving and investing in such solid items.

A definite trend indicating preference for patriarchy is noticeable among some segments of Khasi society. Views were expressed by the informants: (i) Khasi society is backward (ii) Khasi society is different from the rest of the nation it would be better if all societies were like Khasi. Then, the law could be uniformly applied. (iii) A majority of the informants said that the matrilineal system is a unique feature of Khasi society. In Shillong, there was a move to make Khasi society patrilineal, but a move failed. This was said to be not in the public interest as it was motivated politically. In Jorhat, such a resolution was put before the Khasi Association a few years ago. But, the motion was rejected. Making Khasi society patrilineal was not in the interest of women. When women stand to gain thereby (as in property) they express approval. This is more noticeable among educated and non-Khasi women, who by adopting a Khasi husband stand to gain as a Khasi<sup>3</sup> (iv) The informants said that they were too humble to express their views; whether a society was patri-centred or matri-centred mattered little to them.

Earlier, women did not participate even in family assemblies. But, it has been meeting that women can attend the village *durbars* in few villages. In Shillong, women insist on attending the assemblies of common interest. They are keen to participate in politics. During my visit to the village of Mavis Dunne, they were planning to place before the *durbar* a resolution protesting against the sect that although the village had a *rong* (tax) for water supply thrice, the scheme was not implemented. In yet other villages, viz. Laitumkroh, women are permitted to attend village *durbars* but they do not participate in its proceedings. In the Khasi village of Mavis Dunne, Mavis Dunne was a Lady Minister. She was one of the five and prominent members of the Khasi Association.

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

ver, there are no Khasi women in the M  
Assembly.

n the *ing* (family) too, many women hav

A 65 year old orthodox Khasi informa  
that his own wife became a Christian when  
nine years ago. Neither her family nor h  
ht that if the religion made her happy, le  
on, he permitted her to bring up the chil  
felt that as the mother, she knew what w  
ren.

Today, there are no legal or social fetters  
ared to the percentage of women outside,  
do not take to professions on a large sca  
en that an educated and urban girl alm  
spise village life and finds a town job or c  
age so as not to have to return to the vil  
es, there are women teachers, women  
rs and women bus-owners. But as the maj  
poor, unskilled professions such as  
ng, daily labour, selling of betel leaf and  
ng in small shops, etc., are very common.  
and vegetable vendors too.

n urban areas and in villages located ne  
, families are smaller than before. They  
rn of nuclear families in patriarchal a  
ial unit (*Kpoh*) had been the predomina  
But now the Khasis show greater pr  
ar type of families. A man with an ind  
greater voice in matters pertaining to his  
In a sense, the trend is good, for one  
e-centred type of social organisation of  
it tended to weaken the sense of resp  
rity of men. Nevertheless, many families  
ies anywhere in the world. A higher fr  
c marriages has given a new complexion t  
ease in the birth-rate and decrease in the d  
arger population, leading to congestion i  
on is greater. And yet, forming the ba  
ty, whether rich or poor, urban or ru  
wise, there are many families where chi

th a healthy respect for both parents. The pattern of a Khasi family will tend towards a smaller nuclear unit under increasing economic pressure and freedom in a modernising and urbanising society. To this ancestor-worship, shared family responsibility, the family head, the *Khadduh*, etc., which are all further weakened.

### Marriages

In the early days, marriage was regarded both as a spiritual and a socio-economic partnership. The woman was to strengthen the ties of kinship. Marriages were by courtship and also by arrangement. The stress is on the former. There are, however, some marriages where parental consent is not obtained but formal ceremonies are fewer. Except in the past, there is a rise in the marriageable age. The age for marriage was always higher than in the Jaintia Hills, this age is now lower by an average of 2 years. Today, the frequency of Khasi non-Khasi marriages is more than before and the range of non-Khasi marriages in which the inter-ethnic marriages take place is widening. There is a slight tilt in the orientation of inter-ethnic marriages. It was always towards the Khasi community. Non-Khasi men sought outsiders to their own land; they did not marry Khasi women.

Now some of them, both men and women, are adopting some non-Khasi ways. As before, when a non-Khasi man adopted Khasi ways, he is accepted as a Khasi. No special ceremony is required for this purpose. Correspondingly, the number of inter-ethnic marriages has increased. These trends were exacerbated during World War II when the British environments enjoyed economic prosperity and a large number of foreigners came here.

Divorces, concubinage and promiscuity are increasing among all sections of the Khasis. A healthier relationship between the husband and wife is seen in the civilised marriage among Christian couples. In predominantly Christian areas, divorces are now being performed in the presence of senior

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

unity, preferably when the *Ksiangs* (sp  
age ceremony are present.

Marriage ceremonies too are simpler and  
ects of Khasis is broader. At times, custo  
may be followed. There is no uniform  
my is still sacrosanct. A couple violating  
outcaste and is not entitled to proper fu  
wise the treatment meted out to such co  
man as before. The hardships of ex-com  
n society have lessened considerably.

at present, Khasi law is more permiss  
er delay in the administration of justice.  
expensive. As a consequence, the deterren  
ncidence of crime is on the increase. E  
eggars or vagrants (*Nongkhrongs*) in the  
umber is more but most of these are non-  
Very few cases regarding property went  
was considered a slur on the family. But,  
property have increased. Independen  
ged the picture. Every family has now  
wing property. Christian parents make  
healthy, sophisticated orthodox Khasis, the  
ake wills too. Khasi courts have follow  
m-conversion and inter-ethnic marriages  
patterns in law and today, neither is a b  
achelor's earnings can be disposed of accor  
ese new tendencies persist, and are develo  
m, they will be incorporated in Khasi law  
Khasis earlier had a high sense of obse  
r and the severity of punishment in some c  
ern people. But, its effect was deterre  
l forms of punishment are not as severe as  
Christianity had no direct impact on  
ded by law but it has preached temperar  
British administration that a uniform law  
(the Criminal Procedure Code) has been t  
the wishes of the local people. The m  
nistering law in the State is a three-tier



bly, the Syiems' assembly and the District  
es the Government established courts.

## erty

The concept of property has not changed  
erty (as against clan property) has acquired  
because of changing times and urbanisation  
ven today, except for house-rites, the  
ltural land in the Khasi Hills, as in  
of the north-east India remains the property  
y or clans and not of individuals. However  
use-rites are allotted to individuals or families  
contrast to the land revenue systems pre-  
of the nation where land is well demarcated  
ver land is recognised. A move is afoot  
Reforms Commission, constituted by the  
alaya, to restructure the land revenue system  
so that land could be surveyed properly  
records developed.

## s

The urban influence on the dress worn  
ed. Most villagers now wear trousers and  
. The well-to-do ones wear jackets in  
e the age-group of 65 wear gold rings round  
en now wear tailored clothes inside, either  
blouses made by machine-woven material  
hankies and shawls and wear shoes and  
arked in the *Bhoi* and *Lyngnam* areas  
er. Most children dress in the western fashion  
y girls around the age-group of six to ten  
Khasi dress.

Basically, the diet of the Khasis has remained  
ne addition of salt, milk and eggs. The eating  
dian or western dishes. Chinese food is  
g the Khasis. Betel nut and leaf are liked  
he elite consider such a habit unsophisticated

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

Khasis even now do not normally eat sweets.

### Education

Khasis have gained by education, sciences, and improved sanitary methods. Unimproved even in villages and good effects of sanitation and knowledge are apparent in the increase of life expectancy, the decrease in the death-rate of children, and old age mortality. Christian education has opened the promise of many openings of position for the Khasis a great deal. But, facilities are not commensurate to the demands. An increasing desire for education is noticeable among many sections of the Khasis who are acquainted with the benefits of education. There is a change in the approach to problems such as health, sanitation and the like. Even in interior areas such as *Sohbarpunji* there are additional schools and colleges run on a co-educational basis.

### Literature

As in many Christian communities, so in the Khasi literature was born at the initiative and under the patronage of the Church. In 1969, a leading Khasi leader observed that the two factors indicating an awareness of literature, viz., love of literature and love of the past, are to be found among the educated Khasis. The Khasi elite have an intense desire for a rich literary culture, a deep pride regarding the past. There is a growing awareness, as is reflected in their up-to-date literary production, and it is also for the Khasi literature to absorb and adapt ideas and thoughts from within and without the country.

### Music, Dance and Song

In the last century, the Welsh Missionaries introduced singing in singing on Solfa notations while the school run by the Catholics produced a number of musicians and pipers who play on staff notation. The style is that of the Khasi folk-songs (mythological

e), and community singing is still heard. National songs and Rabindra Sangeet, and so popular. Gramophone records, radios delight grown-ups and children alike as the new class of modern Khasi songs blending the harmony of western pop music is gaining in the towns. The music is also tied to the hymn or the cinema hit.

Both Indian and western dancing are liked. The predominant preference among the youth is for dancing, jam-sessions and other modern types. There was no solo dancing among the Khasis. Dancing of Bengal and Assam are known and liked. Khasi communal and festive dances like *Jhum* and warrior-dance, annual features of which have declined in practice, have been revived by the missionaries. *Pomblang*, festival of goat sacrifice, also known as *Krem* dance still continues. The Christians do not help in these festivities whereas, initially, they helped in them or witness them. And, in *Shillong* for Christmas among the Catholics include dancing.

### Education and Games

Hunting is not very popular now-a-days. *Shillong* are still in vogue. Rural folk play various games viz., carrom, cards, football, hockey, cricket, tennis, table-tennis and badminton. Popular among children are: playing seesaw on the trunk of trees, a game played by making holes in moving stones in it which is common in *Shillong* with balls. A favourite sport among the upper classes is riding downhill in crude hand-carts fitted with wheels which are also used for transport. High society games like golf are popular in the upper sections in *Shillong*. The cinema provides entertainment to all Khasis. Shadow plays and dramatics, particularly betting on archery, is also popular.

## enclature

The Khasis still attach more importance to a good name than to its meaning—Chandro has been modified to Shandro Mohan. A Catholic priest encouraged the use of Khasi names, and as Christian influence is strong, the earlier Khasi names are broken down. There is a trend to choose, for the sake of pretensions. I met a young girl named 'Parliament' and 'Seminar'; other catchy western names like 'Antwel', 'Morningstar', etc. The educated Khasi has adopted the pan-Indian and western practice of adding the surname of her husband to her personal name. But amongst many Khasis, the old custom of everyone being known by his or her own name and that of the first child. Then, for all practical purposes, the name 'Mother of Raju' or 'Father of Darisa' or 'Simon' as the case may be. A recent noticeable trend among educated Khasi Christians is the insistence on returning to the clan name of the maternal line. Old names are not used in everyday life and are rarely found in school registers, census forms and electoral lists. In a sophisticated Christian family, the mother and father are addressed as *kinie* and *u Kpa*. Brothers, sisters and children are addressed by name.

## ages

There are at present 1,839 inhabited villages in the Khasi hills. The settlement pattern of some of the older villages has changed. New villages have sprung up near areas that have gained otherwise in importance. Some of the older villages have expanded in size and are now giving the semblance of a much larger village. The interior are hardly affected. In most villages, small shops and tailor shops have sprung anew. The larger, markedly Christian ones, and those with a large population, have schools and cultural centres. Hillside villages have markets too. In the early days when families shifted to new sites, the pattern of households sprang up. These were loosely connected by economic and social ties and owed allegiance

man. The scene has now been altered, so

The village is not as cohesive a unit as in the past. The area of a medium sized village is about 1000 acres. Villages nearer to industries and towns have changed. Despite the forces of change and their effects on the economy, the outlook of the village remains the same; however, individualistic and separatist forces are at work. But for village backward villages, most villages have changed; the village is no longer a strong primary community and family revolve. Near *Cherapunji* ignorant to such a degree that they were not aware of the national anthem. In another village in *Lyngdoo* did not know the colours of the national flag. This may be true of other backward areas in the hills also. The gulf between the believers of the villages is wider than in the urban areas.

### **Living and Architecture**

Urbanisation has led to greater mobility and living have changed both in villages and towns. Living in towns is distinctly non-Khasi and in villages, the huts are simpler. But, wealthier people build permanent structures. Villages and houses formerly considered lucky. The superstitions that a house built in a triangular spot, *dur khoh*, with a tree in front is in vogue but on a far smaller scale. The custom of *Ing* during which an animal was sacrificed before occupying a house is no longer practiced in the hills. Instead, there is a type of house with the western pattern.

### **Economy**

The primary occupation of the majority of the people has remained the same, viz., cultivation, but have undergone rapid changes in several other aspects. There has been a spurt in the economy; there are increasing numbers of secondary sources of income, cultivation of cash crops is undertaken on a larger scale. Cash crops like rubber, selling of betel leaf and nut are also

## PRESENT KHASI SOCIETY

shops have also sprung up. Even semi-skilled persons have found new economic opportunities. Increasing urbanisation and a town in the lush forests are disappearing as trees are felled. Rapidly coming up in urban areas and areas surrounding the availability of faster communication has mobility and independence. The older generation covering long distances on foot but, the younger ones to avail of transport facilities even for short distances have brought villages into close touch with new articles of consumption. *Biris* (tobacco) and cigarettes are sold at every corner of any village. The expansion of towns has created better markets for agricultural commodities. But, with the emergence of income, the avenues of expenditure have increased. However, since available surplus of investment has increased proportionately, the village economy shows proportionate signs of growth.

Changes in occupational structure have not brought about changes in the earlier traditional occupations of Khasi tribal society. The majority of villages are still socially backward and as such, not much interest in children's education. As such, they may not be able to avail of employment opportunities, especially in the near future. Gifts of nature are the main economic life of the hill people. Human labour on abundant hilly land with low fertility forms the main economic resources of the villages. Most villages are still within their traditional boundaries. Among the Khasis, land ultimately belongs to the people. People are showing increasing interest in stock and poultry (meat and dairy animals). Even the chief's own land and property, he has no special rights over the land by virtue of being a chief. Government has initiated many schemes in this field which were initially encouraged by the missionaries.

Changes observed during the years 1947-50 have been that some farmers have begun to present their demands to the Government and avail of Government advice and assistance. Missionaries qualified in agriculture put across new ideas. During the 10 years following Independence

of potato, kosohsin (*Colocasis exculen*) and among the villagers by the Government as a cash-crop. The Department of Agriculture and sanctions grants to construct rice granaries to store rain water. Many Khasis have now moved from single-cropping to multi-cropping in the uplands also. Use of fertilisers, manures and insecticides has increased. In the flattish valleys in which the rice is grown in terraced and well-irrigated fields, the rice is grown on the northern border of the district wherever the surface admits of them. With this exception, most of the crops like unirrigated rice, pulses and the like are grown on the hill-sides by the slash-and-burn method which is still popularly used, especially in the Uplands. However terrace cultivation is increasingly adopted.

The Khasis are, comparatively, backward in economic development. Accepted indicators of economic development show that a large number of people living below the poverty line in Meghalaya compared to other States. In 1969-70 the per capita income in Meghalaya was Rs 327, one of the lowest in India. To ensure a reasonable standard above the poverty line, the per capita income should be at least Rs 480. The per capita income in Meghalaya are higher than the all-India average (1969), due to higher transport costs and value added in the products. The industrial backwardness of the Khasis is due to the fact that except for the *Cherrapunjee* jute mill, there is no industry worth the name. However, the Government is planning ambitious projects in this sphere, such as the establishment of small-scale industries.

To the early Khasi villagers, mountains were the source of life in their marginal economic life. From the mountains came firewood (grass and twigs, pine cones), food (mushrooms), medicine (from traditional herbs) and honey. From the streams came fish and in the hills they went to hunt for food. In the present village economy, cash is required for the meagre necessities of life and these are more than before, especially in the different urban environment today. Cash is required for the daily necessities of life.

## ENT KHASI SOCIETY

is primarily agricultural and the growth of industries in urban and other areas has partly met the need for cash.

One factor affecting the Khasi industrial development is the retention of in-group consciousness. A Khasi resident prefers to work not only in the hills but in his own surroundings. Hardly 2,000 Khasis are employed in the Khasi Hills. At times, the new training facilities acquired, do not have scope in their formation, especially in small Khasi villages. So they have to look for their livelihood. New small-scale industries multiplying fast are carpentry, printing, book-binding, house-building, etc. Other mushrooming industries are bet-weaving and mat-weaving. Recently, the Government announced that two industries would be set up in the War area—essential oils (extracted from betel leaves) and preservation (of oranges and pineapples). Government is encouraging spinning, weaving and sericulture. The hill areas with large forests are very rich in timber. But in many villages, especially in the Jaintia areas, there is no pronounced desire for change in the pattern of living; this will perhaps, be met by education.

Examination of the standard of food, clothing and other consumer goods used by the people shows a wide range of living of the majority of the population changed over the last 25 years or so. But, this is not the case of Christians and those who have embraced Christianity among the rest of the Khasis. Christianity facilitated the expansion of cultivation of cash crops which increased the sources of income which has brought about a change. Income from forest products such as sale of timber and hatch has also increased greatly. Employment of casual labour on a daily and monthly basis has gained a greater importance as secondary source of income. The economy is still essentially traditional, but a change in recent years can be easily noticed. The urban market has affected villagers to a small extent but any improvement in the traditional handicrafts has not been a significant break-through in the agricultural sector.



possible. One change of considerable significance is the transformation of the village economy from a self-sufficient one to a progressive and

There is considerable decline in fishing and indiscriminate felling of forests.

While on the average, the Christian Khasis are financially more stable than the orthodox or Hinduised Khasis. It seems to be financially more stable than the Hinduised Khasis as more by way of gold, land, house, etc. It has an appearance that gives the impression of wealth; he spends more as well

### **Political Set-up**

The majority of the political leaders in the Khasi and Jaintia hills are products of missionary education, both Christian and Hindu. The leadership is of a superior calibre, a type highly respected by the people. The Legislative Assembly of the State is still in an embryonic stage. A District Council seems to be necessary in the early stages of development of Meghalaya.

In the wake of Independence, autonomous hill areas were set up under Schedule VI of the Constitution. The Native States system and the chiefdom system were abolished. The sufferance of the District Council, which was the basis of the hill areas, has been abolished. Hence the District Council finds it difficult to maintain its position which is neither offensive to regional aspirations nor the blue-print of an ill-fitting all-India scheme. The Khasis are of the opinion, that since Meghalaya is now a part of India and as the District Council was meant to be a measure of autonomy and self-rule under the Government of Assam, a change in the political set-up is necessary. The Khasis gained much political independence from the minimum British administration of the hill areas. It won a point in that the rights, privileges and interests of the hill area have now been embodied in many orders, regulations and enquiries which lend themselves to the Khasis desire that progress must be based on the wishes of the people. This is the outstanding demand of the Khasis, a highly practical democracy.

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

tive world, based on a sober and legitimate concept of general will.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the Christian informants examined the political system through the District Council satisfactorily, though some overhauled the District Council was pragmatic, served the people adequately and was not fossilised in accounting the complex nature of present conditions into reality the political needs and aspirations. It represented all sections of Khasi society and dissensions between Christians and non-Christians. The Council has not brought about many important changes required urgently. But it has inspired confidence in the people and amendments to the Khasi law necessary for the next stage of Khasi society without alteration. As it consists of Khasis, it can function well within the State of Meghalaya, a body consisting of Khasis, Garos and Jaintias. But a few informants, among them Christians, felt that the District Council was not concerned with the larger interests of the people. They were only interested in continuing to their self-aggrandisement and avoided solving real problems of the people. There is also a growing feeling among many informants, whether after a full-scale assembly has come into being, a middle tier of institutions like the District Councils, will at all be designed in the context of the earlier institutions consisting of hill and plains people. The role of District Councils will therefore require further discussion and debate in the Khasi State of Meghalaya for some time to come.

As stated earlier, the District Council has no political functionaries such as *syiems*. The role of *syiems* in the changing political structure in a democratic set-up, many informants felt, is an anachronism and therefore not required. The *syiems* had no political functions in a democracy. A minority of orthodox Khasis

the divine in origin and represented the earlier  
 ns of Khasis and so should continue to exist.  
 My informants agreed that Khasi women have  
 status today. However, the number of  
 ing to politics was small.

Politically, the Khasi Hills, like most pa  
 th-east region of the country, is in a state of  
 map of this area has been redrawn only  
 tical institutions have grown in small areas,  
 ed by a handful of district level officials. It  
 e before the new found political freedom is  
 ple and for traditions to establish themselves  
 n to stabilise.

### Religious Attitudes

The tendency among all sects of the Khasis  
 wn to the core of the religion and understa  
 ether of the Khasi *Niam*, Christianity  
 nduism. Outward expressions such as rituals  
 superficial and superfluous and much lesser i  
 these. The performance of some rituals and  
 divination, etc., by some affluent Khasis can  
 attempt to find the way back to God. Lik  
 kkim, the Khasis still believe in a Supre  
 ities of the grove, cave and stream. Howe  
 ucated, the urbanites and most Christians,  
 clined considerably.

The recent trend is that religion is not to  
 a belief, unchanging and settled, becaus  
 currences believed to have taken place at on  
 ust be seen as a relation of man to God ba  
 rary knowledge and tempered with reason  
 owing that religion alone guides humanity to  
 goodness and is a benevolent philosophy  
 ion. It is also realised that the basic princip  
 e the same. Belief in monotheism has thus g  
 tions of Khasis. The trend is therefore to  
 d brotherhood of man as taught by the Un  
 makrishna Mission. Such beliefs prevail ar  
 nger Khasis and among the broad-minded

ther tendency is to judge religious ideals in terms of practicability and reasoning; the emphasis is on sanction or theory. Further, material needs are temporal ideals. The religious life of all sects is becoming simpler and austere.

There is now more rapport among the different sects and between Christians and the others as has been noted earlier, one reason for the coming together of the Christian sects is the earlier discovery by the Government to the work of foreign missionaries and movements and funds, etc. were controlled, thus found their sources of funds getting dried up. Added to this is the revival of ancient socio-religious nature. The need to meet a major cause for closing of ranks among the sects. Inter-sect rivalry and attacks on one another have now given place to more rapport. A crisis such as the need to provide succour to refugees from Bangladesh during 1971.

There is also increasing rapport between the orthodox Khasis. Both sections have moved away from their rigid positions and towards each other. Things nowadays refer to the common core of Christianity, the orthodox realise the logic in the things. This is contrary to the attitude of the past when Christianity was considered an alien religion, often, propagating it meant preaching to the heathens. It is now argued. If Plato and Aristotle were Christianised, why not Khasi *Niam* too? In a Christmas message a couple of years ago, the non-Christians too should be looked upon. Prayers offered for them. This is taken as a departure from earlier attitudes that salvation was for Christians only. Such a change in attitude is noticeable. As has been noted, Christians, who were not allowed to witness socio-religious functions like the traditional dances of the orthodox Khasis, are not now so prohibited. Christians not only witness but also assist. The use of musical instruments is now allowed in churches. Many Christian priests not only refer to

aspects of Khasi *Niam*. Negative criticisms have also decreased. The orthodox Khasis too have shown religious tolerance and appreciate the humanity and the human approach of the missionaries that certain taboos that hold back modernisation should be dropped. The taboo against the use of electricity for lighting and the laying down of pipelines for water supply have been relaxed. It has also been realised that strict observance of certain items of food will deprive children of nourishment.

Certain matters evoke uniform reactions. The objection of religious persuasions, object to modernisation on religious and other grounds. The arguments for modernisation conducive to better health have been accepted. Land has increased, land is available in plenty. In the eyes of the world, Khasis are in a minority; and so, modernisation is justified.

Reflecting the classical dichotomy between tribal religions, a distinction has recently been made between tribal religions (in which participation is restricted to a specific group) and universal religion (which is independent of any specific social group or tribe). According to this criterion, the Khasi Unitarianism, influenced by the Rama Krishna Mission belongs to the latter sects. They respect every religion. As Hinduism and Christianity see their own supernatural and their own theology as the only true one, they are in essence intolerant of other views. This is a western tendency, specially in American religions to mean as Norbeck points out, 'ideas to which one feels strongly or desires intensely'. Among Asian Christians, the situation is somewhat different. Christians in Asia also participate in ancestral worship, go to temples or shrines, consult astrologers, etc. In wedding ceremonies (Christian and non-Christian) and in two contrasting funeral rites (to make the dead happy). But in the Khasi society, where Christians have given up earlier religious practices, ancestral practices have been retained. In time

tians resort to traditional divinatory  
assessment ceremonies.

The change in attitude and tolerance am  
of the Khasis is however a healthy trend  
ground for the all round development o  
ess should be smoother in view of the inh  
Khasis themselves. For, as Pandit Nehru r  
tribal people are much more disciplined  
most other people in India. From the rel  
trends are in consonance with the up  
ing in most of the progressive nations o  
now think in terms of universal brother  
ul religion. The effort of every section o  
ty is for a greater dialogue amongst  
een the Khasis and the non-Khasis too.  
n sum, the present trends in Khasis soci  
transformation which began imperceptibl  
onversions by Krishna Chandra Pal, 1  
y pro-west after the annexation of the K  
h, but there was an under current of t  
re later super-imposed by a tendency to  
(Illus. 13). The pro-Christian trend st  
ated by the census figures, even though a  
e Khasi society is in the direction of  
re.

among the Christians, the Protestants, an  
ntrast to non-Christians, are more adv  
ally an air of superiority and self-confiden  
sitions of power or authority and a high r  
lite are Christians. This has given rise  
bism in politics and other spheres with C  
persons of their own faith and is felt to  
more towards Christians than others. Th  
morandum submitted to the Government  
he orthodox Khasis, in particular, have b  
st. This kind of a phenomenon is witne  
also and goes under the name of cast  
istic politics.

### Changes in Proselytisation

Christianity is a potent factor that has brought about some changes in the culture and structures of the tribes in north-west India, as it has done in the north-eastern region of India, as is indicated by the following table.

<i>Name of tribe</i>	<i>Percentage of Christians</i>
Mizos	100
Tagas	50
Khasis	60

More than ten per cent of the Khasi population are Christians in the tribal areas. The Christian missionaries did not bring about any change in the social structure of Khasi society, but they did change the ideology of the Khasis. Where they did not, they have been seen that Christianity received a setback in the form of a breakdown of intra-clan marriages.

Christianity is growing in strength among the Khasis since the advent of Independence and the gradual withdrawal of foreign missionaries from the scene. Relevant statistics have been cited in Chapters I and V (See also Appendix A). A re-examination of these figures once again will bring out the actual trend towards proselytisation.

The total population of the United Khasi Hills in 1971 was 491,209, of which the population of the Khasi Hills has been estimated to be 3,52,000 (figure given by the Census authorities, till the time of writing). There has been an increase of about 29% over the figures of 1961. The population alone over a decade is more than the growth of the total population (including the number of non-Khasis) in the Khasi Hills. However, the total Christian population in the Khasi Hills which was stated to be 144,879 in 1961 has increased to 248,000 in 1971. The Census data on the Christian population have not been released yet. The Christian population in the Khasi Hills was estimated by the Census authorities and informally from some sources close to the authorities. It is hence difficult to say definitely the Christian population in the Khasi Hills region.

## NT KHASI SOCIETY

proximately 71% during the 1961-1971 decade. The all-India average growth of Christians during the same period was only 32.60% and the total population increase was only 29.30%. If the figures cited are correct, they include Christian population in the near future. It was part of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District in the Census of 1971, they obviously indicate a sharp increase in conversions to Christianity during the decade. At least the figure of 248,000 Christians in the district is obtained unofficially from the Census sources. The figures claimed by different Christian denominations at the beginning of the year 1973 was 212,000. The reason for the discrepancy could be due to the large number of Jaintias, Garos and others who live in the Khasi Hills. It is not certain whether the 212,000 as gathered from various Churches includes all or any of the ethnic groups mentioned. It does not include them and represents only the Khasis. If 60% of the Khasis are Christians, a significant increase from the 1961 figure of 45%. This jump again is based on information gathered in the field and from reliable informant. If the figure of 212,000 Christians and 25,000 other ethnic groups, then the percentage of Christians will drop down to 45%. The orthodox Khasis claim that not more than 45% are Christians whereas most Christians claim that 60% of the Khasi population.

While the figures discussed above indicate a definite growth in the population of Christians, it is the average decade growth of population that is normal growth and addition by way of conversions have taken place during the decade. The extent of such conversions or reasons for conversions are not judged until the census data is properly analyzed. The Christian sect which is fast gaining in the Jaintia Hills is the Roman Catholic sect. It is the foreign missionaries working in the interior who are rapidly expanding its activities in the field. The Roman Catholic sect also attracts more Khasis to its fold because of its tolerance of certain features of Khasi culture.



far into the interior of backward areas and hilly areas, where other sects did not reach. Catholics also separate religious and social service, some Catholics do seek counsel for family planning; Catholic doctors cooperate in health programmes. This sect is better organised and has funds at its disposal than the other Christians who have to subsist only on locally raised resources. It is not to say that the Roman Catholic sect will not grow in strength in the future years to come even though it is handicapped in recruiting priests due to the shortage of vocations.

The majority of the elite in Khasi society are Christians in positions of power and authority in the Khasi Hills are also Christians. There is no doubt that the holders of authority go more to the Christian churches. It may be one of the reasons for a higher rate of literacy. Further, most Christian sects provide for their members, in Government service or elsewhere, a means of earning, and arranging for their being invited to foreign countries like the USA, Canada or countries in Europe for technical courses or seminars.

During certain moments of stress, the people become suspicious about the role of missionaries, many of the difficulties to national integration were attributed to them. It is not unnatural for people to have certain suspicions about the roles of foreign missionaries. The association with foreign governments was one of the reasons. There is a continuous interaction between the Church and local traditions in spite of the differences in Christianity.

### **Criticism against Missionaries**

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion. So, to attack missionaries on the basis of religion is not fair. In the Khasi Hills, there is no doubt that the missionaries indulged in coercion, but apart from Proselytisation and humiliations, their sterling work has left a permanent mark appreciated by all. It is not correct to say

s of the spread of Christianity were introduced to a new religion or the fo looked upon as a status symbol, mere fact that the new religion was the religion of was a deeper tie than what appeared in alone could explain cases such as those *riang* who prayed alone for seven years in a h till the Unitarian movement gained m is a new church there, a building capable ults on its benches and an indefinite num e floor. When Margaret Barr attended t 36, the place was nearly full. Why is it re and education schemes of Govern t personnel and financed liberally, oach the missionaries for a helping hand? te Indianisation, nationalisation and con e the indigenous Khasi culture, Christi gth? Contrary to some popular belief it i British administrators did not always agre ding the approach of the missionaries to v tribal people. And yet, the impact of Chri come to stay.

## me

Khasi society is today in a state of flu in the process of assimilation and absorp trends and blending into its fabric cu l and political advancement of the rest of tting integrated in the mainstream. In -frogging' certain transitional stages of it is absorbing western ideas faster ever e in India, assisted ably by mass media lik zines. Dr Elwin remarked: 'It may we run all the tribes will lose their distinc a drab uniformity, possibly dominated by American civilization that is so rapidly world . . . many of the mbre sophisticated y all their culture and individuality bu n have retained a great deal that is good While the basic foundations of the Khasi

ess intact the superstructure is undergoing radical changes caused by westernisation. Revival of Khasi ancient culture, awareness of its value, a boost to the economy and a faster pace of life. The marked influence of Christianity. Christians stand closely together. There is a change, towards vocations, the preference for white-collar jobs. Women are taking increasing part in professions outside the home, though not in the same way. This role is no longer considered incompatible with motherhood. Some cultural and civilisation changes mentioned above are recent. The pattern of behaviour in Khasi has not altered radically but a re-thought of its effects is underway.

The work of the missionaries in the field has been taken over in a large measure by the Government and by work initiated by voluntary organisations like the Red Cross, Rotary or the Lions Club. They come to acquire more and more political consciousness and form an effective political group in the Khasi Hills. Still, a majority of the rural population feel a sense of frustration and non-fulfilment, a feeling which is the rural areas of the nation.

The following points emerge in this context:

- 1) The Khasis have become increasingly conscious of the need to play an active part in the development of the particular, and in the life of the nation.
- 2) There are two distinct groups among the Khasis, first, an orthodox group keen on revival of traditional culture, the second, a group of Christians who are comparatively more westernised. Despite religious differences, however, the Khasis are closer than ever before.
- 3) Like the rest of the Indians, trying to keep pace with fast developing technological and social changes, the Khasis also manifest a sense of fear and uncertainty.
- 4) The important question that emerges is the future role to be played by the missionaries in the Khasi Hills and as pointed out earlier, their role should be more and more confined to pro-

## T KHASI SOCIETY

Church and proselytisation, the work being taken over by the other agencies.

The present Khasis are in a state of a rational transition. Pluralism in the present is of a subdued nature. Hence, the social process is less complex than elsewhere nor are the nuances of the social basis is still predominantly ethnic. Following of the Khasi society towards a modern movement has not significantly affected

### REFERENCES

- Judgment in the Election Petition No. 43 of 1962.  
Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and other Cultures* (1961).  
Recently a Khasi lawyer, Thangkhiew, has taken a case on should get the property and the daughter the name of the clan and the right to property go to the daughter. This has sparked off a controversy; a prominent worker said she did not understand this move for, the name of the clan and the right to property go to the daughter. A consumption level of Rs 40 per month has been set as necessary to meet minimum nutritional needs.  
Hamlet Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasis*, p. 307.  
Hsu Francis, "Christianity and the Anthropology of the Khasis", *Anthropology and Archaeology*, (1969) p. 203.  
Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society* (New York: 1969).  
Roy Burman, "Hillmen of North-East India and their Economic Development", *Vanyajati*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 113-114.

# 7

## Conclusion

It may be concluded that the Khasis living in the steep and rugged mountains of the Khasi Hills have undergone a spectacular transformation during the last century. From a primitive, superstition-ridden and economically backward people of the past, they have come a long way to the threshold of the modern age. They are today playing a significant role in the nation's destiny.

The early matri-centred Khasi society, composed of small village units, was highly egalitarian but it was isolated. Contact with other civilisations and religions like Hinduism and Islam, was insignificant and marginal. It was at the fringes of the sprawling Khasi Hills that the missionaries, based on their belief of being the chosen people, introduced the influence of Christianity which began around 1813 and led to a lasting change. The first efforts of the missionaries to preach Christianity among the Khasis were made in the early years. The Welsh Presbyterian Mission, established by design, considered the Khasi Hills a promising area for evangelised work here in 1841, heralding the beginning of missionary activity in these hills to infuse new ideas and technological concepts.

The initial missionaries faced many hardships and difficulties that could have made a determined person withdraw disheartened. But they persevered with the local people and by persuasion

## CONCLUSION

endous amount of zeal, devotion and persistence over. Emphasis was rightly placed on literacy through literacy and education. The Bible was recognised as a powerful media through which the Gospel could be spread. The Khasis were also attracted to the excellent health care and medical treatment available. In addition to conversions, there were other benefits available. Conversions to Christianity grew stage by stage. Christianity extended in gradual but substantial numbers throughout the Khasi Hills. New missions came, the Protestants and broke new grounds. The Catholics overcame difficulties, including, as reported, stoning of missionaries and priests whom the Khasis initially refused to accept. Local sects of Christianity also grew. It has been pointed out that the contribution of Christian missionaries to the development of the Khasi is many and varied, both as a direct result of their work and due to far-reaching spread-effects. Earlier, the influence of missionary work could be noticed in almost every facet and aspect of Khasi society, while the basic foundations remained more or less unchanged. Matrilineal system, taboos regarding marriage and during pre-marriage, social organisation, etc. remained more or less unchanged. In other aspects have undergone total or partial change. The missionaries gave the Khasis the Bible, the consequent literature, and raised them to a higher level of knowledge and understanding. In the field of medicine, hygiene, music, diet, economic development, introduction of new crafts and skills, removal of superstitious myths, superstitions and fears, affluence, and widening of outlook and development of self-reliance and confidence among the Khasis, Christianity stands out as the prime mover and major factor. It resulted in more than half the Khasis being Christians. The process of conversion still goes apace despite the withdrawal of foreign missionaries and inflow of foreign missionaries. The evidence in the Khasi Hills to show that Christianity did not employ any unfair methods, force or coercion in conversions. On the contrary, when they

many superficial aspects of the Khasi M... questioned; this provided a good gr... religion. Further, the Christian mission... minds of the people through their heal... ble humanitarian service. The fact that... ace of the rulers also made them 'status... d from any standpoint, the work of... e Khasi Hills has done incalculable good... direction of the Khasi society today cou... ent.

in the highly resilient Khasi society, r... versions and latent forces of pride in t... re and tradition were provoked and... ant *Seng Khasi* movement to revive old... led the growth of Christianity and in so... l the missionary endeavours. With the... on assisting in the process of incule... ous outlook and a sense of being part of... Khasi ethos and world view have been... urther, the synthesis of all the influen... onary work has brought about a significan... i society and culture and has helped re... vant and superficial values that had to be... xt of the modern, rational world and at t... ned the substantial core factors in the soci... e preserved and nurtured. Thus, a mo... y of the present day has emerged.

The present Khasi society depicts differ... rnisation, a second of a leap backwards i... ncient Khasi culture and another towa... ing from the efforts of Ramakrishna Mi... ss of integration with the rest of the... co-socio-economic fields.

The western influence on the Khasi soc... forms such as dress, a distinct regar... ence of the westerner or the 'white-sk... rn names and modes of behaviour, we... e, etc. Thanks to improved communicat... lly superior western civilisation has made... on the Khasis.

## CONCLUSION

As regards the trend towards preservation of heritage, even the Christian missionaries have returned to their original positions. They now not only refer to the important tenets of Khasi Acheh but non-Christians alike closely observe some customs and traditions.

In the direction of Indianisation, it may be said that the Khasis are appreciative of the other neighbouring hill areas. The Jaintia Hills was the birth place of foreign missionaries and the hill areas of the north-eastern India. There was no move for separate status outside the Indian Union emanating from the Naga and Mizo Hills. After Indian Independence in 1947 The Khasi leader, Mr. Nichols Roy, himself a convert and a member of the Church of God mission or sect, actively participated in the independence struggle and welcomed the integration of the Khasis in the Indian Union. Rev. Nichols Roy was a member of the Constituent Assembly and one of the members of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution giving powers to District Councils to the tribal areas to protect the customs and usages of the tribals. Only the Jaintia Hills wanted independent status for hills. The movement was unsuccessful, left India for the then East Pakistan. Since Independence, the political, economic and social changes at work in the country have brought about a measure of integration of the Khasis with the Indian Union. It has been possible, in no small measure, because of the Khasis' strong ethos and culture.

In 1970 there were in the Khasi Hills many foreign missionaries from various countries such as the United Kingdom, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, etc. They were qualified not only in education but also in medicine, agriculture, handicrafts etc. In pursuance of the Government policy to gradually remove foreign missionaries from India, many have since left but some of them who have maintained their association with the Khasi Hills have been granted Indian citizenship. The foreign missionaries are highly respected by the Khasis compared to their Indian counterparts. Indeed, many foreigners having left their countries



under arduous conditions in these areas. The extraordinary zeal and a greater sense of mission purpose compared to the local missionaries has led to the view that there is an inherent and some justification for the foreigners in the Indian subcontinent. The criticism about missionary activity aimed at them is touched upon. A few missionaries in the past, not in the Khasi Hills, were suspected of anti-national activity among the tribals. Demands for autonomy and acts of violence in the Naga and Mizo Hills were often seen in many circles, to be the result of a feeling of alienation from the rest of the country among the people of the north-east, due to foreign missionary preaching. There might have been such individual instances in missionary work in these parts but these were the later day missionaries. Such anti-intellectualism have arisen out of a sense of a reflex reaction against the past attacks on missionary activity and there are not two such instances in the long history of the region. It cannot be held to act as a major slur on the vast quantity of beneficial work done by the missionaries. A few thoughts on the future of Khasis are given. The society was kin-oriented; common blood ties were the other's allegiance. The earlier village community was a face-to-face society, implying that all members were in direct contact or at least known to one another. The village was considered as a cohesive unit and a single religious community. A common bond uniting all the Khasis was the material wants few. The scene has now changed. Associated with the technical and material changes in the Khasi Hills, as it has affected the corresponding change in the attitudes, thought and behaviour of the people who are affected. The arrival of a new religion brought in further changes. Material changes are more subtle, gradual and frequent developments much deeper than the changes of material and technical improvements. The society has absorbed some of these changes but the old way of life in the villages administered by the community is even between siblings. An individual

## CONCLUSION

in terms more of himself and the newly extended family unit and not of the larger family or community. Thanks to increasing rapport among different groups there is now more harmony in a family of members adhering to different sects. The changes have led to the earlier sureness of folkways and successful habits of nearly four centuries of possession of the Khasis, being shaken. Absolute security of independence, social equality and a good work ethic persist and can be usefully harnessed as part of the Khasi culture, the skills, insight and ability understood and nurtured for being channelised for the benefit of the Khasis.

Restoration of native interests and ethos must be a concern of the Government as economic progress must be reinforced by new sources of prestige and status. Education is a double-edged sword. The Khasis for a new type of fast-changing society. The traditional values still count. Otherwise, the social fabric will be shattered and substituted by undesirable and destructive ideologies. The 'ethos' of a people is built up on the basis of interdependence. Since interdependence is inevitable for the survival and the progress of all, progress must be achieved, for, it is an important factor in cultural development. When missionaries withdraw from the scene and welfare agencies of the Government take over, there is need to train officials in such a manner that they can take over some, if not the same, of the care that the missionaries displayed lest there be a vacuum of attention and frustration. Social and spiritual values are more important and potent than material benefits. It holds good with regard to all governments. Governments must embrace more and more aspects of development. It would be useful to harness the knowledge, skill and winning ways of the missionaries. As the foreign missionary activity in the region declines and the policy of all the denominations shifts towards replacement of foreign

## THE MISSIONARY AM

n personnel, there is need to ensure that this is maintained by replacing trained foreign persons equally well-trained. Care should be taken to employ specialists capable of understanding the situation. But, exceptions could also be made for missionaries who have worked for long years in the area and are bona fides are not suspect, so that they can continue in these areas and bring to bear on the development their very valuable knowledge and experience. Missionaries played a vital and useful role in the formation of the society. It would be an expensive step to replace them abruptly.

In taking over the work of missionaries, care should be taken to see that the transition is made smoothly. A sudden change with the past will tantamount to a radical surgery for the tribals and this will be detrimental to healthy growth. In socio-economic activities, the Government and voluntary bodies should work in tandem to deliver things as to communicate ideas. The primary aim is to help the developmental activities, to enable the people to help themselves. Opportunities should be created more important than alms. It is by a psychological orientation that the people feel that they themselves are the agents of growth, that a sense of belonging and ownership is created. This psychological orientation is essential for generating growth and will bring confidence and optimism instead of uncertainty, confusion and low morale which can result from an over-bearing approach. In the changing context of the Khasi Hills, development work can succeed without rapport which is essential for character formation, continuity, self-discipline and growth. Ideas and procedures should also be adapted to the needs and capacities of the people. For example, the hours of school work so adjusted that not a disconnect is maintained between theoretical studies and practical work. Also available human hands could be used to the maximum.

In the setting of the Khasi Hills the vital

## CONCLUSION

Khasi and his land cannot be over-emphasised. Anthropologists such as Margaret Mead have often criticised the unabashed, and unplanned exploitation of the under too has said: 'The relation between the dominant and at no time can break the bond of mutual dependence. They stand at an advantage in that they can exploit the resources of developed areas; for they are still the dominant'. At present, some Khasi elite are moving towards modern societies and two not merely different types of societies'. Hence, economic schemes and social policies of a balanced nature based on the relation between the Khasi and their surroundings.

Arising out of this study of the role of missionaries in the Khasi some generalisations can be attempted. The important questions posed in the overall study are: 'What institutions established by the missionaries are still functioning in this country, whether in the field of education, health, or others. The elite in the country, whether political leaders, even today consider the missionaries as a symbol to send children to missionary schools. This is because of the high quality of education imparted. The spirit of enquiry that such institutions imparted compared to the vast amount earmarked by the government for education, the missionaries spend very little. The success achieved and why is there so much success? We readily use the words 'missionary education'. We exhort people to undertake any work that is good. It arises from our inherent admiration for the successful work of the missionaries. The missionaries performed their task with great humility and without any sense of superiority. Their techniques were psychological, approaching the minds of the people and without undue pressures that might have caused resistance. They were above all patient in their work. The standing success they have achieved is a result of the effectiveness of their techniques. Today, in India, we are faced with the problem of economic growth. We want to increase the number of schools and factories. Changes formerly required

ries are compressed within short intervals. All work is done at top speed. The task is to match the speed of the modern Government employs a large army of extension workers, visits villages and spends colossal sums for ushers and interpreters. The results, admittedly, are not very satisfactory. Does the solution to the problems lie in the lack of sociological assets and requirements of the community? That a proper approach could be formulated for higher productivity and quicker results? While the basic goals of the planning are good, they fail in translation of ideas due to lack of communication? What magic chord is the missing link? The responses to a lone missionary in the field. The gamut of governmental machinery is uncoordinated? Do we tend to be very academic in our approach and bring a drab uniform approach to every problem? We have left us a legacy of an impersonal bureaucracy which stood neutral between individuals and the community. The sense of justice in the community but the lack of standards cannot be effective in motivating the achievement of defined goals. This may sound a little what hackneyed but that does not change the fundamental and basic character of the problem. The answer must be found to this and the painful process of socialisation and industrialisation, such as de-Indianisation, and resulting social disintegration. Social change should be directed as a part of economic growth and not left to chance.

In this task, specialists like professional sociologists, economists and others should be employed so that distortions in Khasi society are avoided. Corrections are possible where necessary. The qualities seen in this dissertation, seemed to be a lack of these qualities in himself and a strong set-up, sources of psychological motivation. At the best heavy odds may yet provide many useful

# Bibliography

## GENERAL

- Bareh, Pakyntein *et al.* *Tribal Awakening* (1965, group study).  
 Bose, Nirmal Kumar. *Cultural Anthropology* (1963).  
 Epstein, A.L. (Ed.). *The Craft of Social Anthropology*.  
 Winnick, Charles. *Dictionary of Anthropology* (London).

## NON-KHASI LITERATURE

- Allen, B.C. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908).  
 Allen, W.J. *Report on the Khasi and Jaintia Hills Territories* (1858).  
 ——— *Census Report of Assam*, Assam Government (1901).  
 Bannerjee, S. "The Khasi Festival of Pomblang", *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology* (Jan. 1956).  
 Bareh, Hamlet *A Short History of Khasi Literature* (1962).  
 ——— *Khasi Democracy* (1964).  
 ——— *The History and Culture of the Khasi People* (1967).  
 Barkataki, S. N. *Tribal Folklore in Assam* (Gauhati, 1970).  
 Chatterjee, S.K. *Kirata-Jana Krti. The Indo-Mongoloids: their contributions to the History and Culture of India*, (1951).  
 Chattopadhyaya, K.P. "Khasi Kinship and Social Organisation", *University of Calcutta* (1941).  
 ——— "Khasi Land Ownership and Sale", *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol. 2. (1948-1949).  
 Choudhary, P.C. *The History of the Civilization of the People of Assam to the 12th Century A.D.* (1959).  
 Clarke, C.B. "The Stone Monuments of the Khasi Hills", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 3 (1874).

- burn, J. "Notes on Stone Implements from the Vellore District", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* XVIII, Pt. 1, XVI (1897).
- T.C. "The Khasis" *Anthropological University, N.S.* Vol. IV (1935).
- Upta, P.K. "A Note on Inter-ethnic Certain Changes in the Life of the Waranyajati (1961).
- a, R.B. *The Racial History of Man* (New
- nfels, U.R. "Double Sex Character of eity", *Journal of the University of Madras* — "Khasi Kinship Terminology in Four os, Vol. 48 (1953).
- ura, J.V. *Totemism in India*.
- r, Captain. *Journal of the Asiatic So* Vol. IX (1940).
- cis, Hsu. "Christianity and the Anthropology and Archaeology (1969).
- E.A. "Notes on Khasi Language", *Census* Vol. I, Assam (1892).
- "Human sacrifices of Assam", *J.A.S.B*
- *History of Assam* (1926).
- yami, P.D. *Folk Literature of Assam: Survey* (1954).
- rnment of Assam. *Agricultural Bulletin*, — *Report of the United Khasi and Jai District Commission in the matter of C Autonomous District for the Jowai Sub-Divi*
- rnment of India/Assam. *Census of India* books—1881 to 1961 (every decade).
- son, George A. *Linguistic Survey of Indi* atta, 1904).
- "Die-Monkhmer-Volker Zentra-valasie *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1907).
- on, P.R.T. "On the Khasis", *Journal of Society*. Vol. 27 (1895).
- "Note on the Khasis, Syntengs, an *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of eland* (1904).

## GRAPHY

- "The Khasis and Austric Theory", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1914).
- *The Khasis* (1914).
- H. C. "The Garo and Khasi Marriages", *Man in India*, Vol. I, (June 1921), pp. 1-10.
- Joseph Dalton. "Notes on Khasi Hill Tribes", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. I, (1855).
- *Himalayan Journals*. Vol. II (1855).
- W. W. A *Statistical Account of Assam* (London, 1879).
- W. M. *Life and Works in Khasi*. (Contributed to *Anthropology* (1948).
- Ernest. *Über Herkennolt und aprache der Khasischen Volker* (1883).
- *Beitrage Zur Sprachen-kunde Histerindia* (1883).
- H. C. *Khulei: The Story of the Khasi Churches* (California, USA—1964).
- Lord. *Lives of Lindsays*.
- Swami. "An Unknown Pioneer Work in the Hills of Assam", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of India* (Delhi and Calcutta—October, 1968).
- Louis J. *Towards an Applied Missionary Anthropology* (1961).
- *The Church and Other Cultures* (1963).
- Anna. *The Khasis : Ethnic Groups in South-east Asia* (1964).
- D. N. *Races and Cultures of India* (1964).
- Arthur. *Christianity and the Government of India* (1964).
- A. M. *Monograph on Khasis : The Nicobarese and Hill Tribes of Assam* (1964).
- No. 2, Ethnographical Gallery, Indian Museum, Calcutta.
- A. J. M. "Report on the Khasia and Jaintia Tribes", *Essays in Anthropology* (Lucknow, n.d.).
- *Khasi Monuments near Shillong* (Shillong Press, 1941).
- Joseph. "Khasi Religion", *Man in India* (1955).
- "The Khasis", *Modern Review*, Vol. 9, (1955).
- Sharat Chandra. "On a recent Instance of the Custom of offering Human Sacrifices to the Khasis", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of India* (1955).



*Journal of the Anthropological Society of America* (1924-1928).

— "A Note on another Instance of the Khasi Offering Human Sacrifices to the Snake Deity", *India*, Vol. 12 (1932).

— "The Khasi Hills", in John Hughes. *The History of Our Times* (1930).

— "Social Groupings in Assam", *Man in India*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1958).  
 — "Effects of Christianity on some aspects of Khasi Culture", *Anthropological Association*, 66 (1967), Washington D.C.—(1967).

— "The Khasi and Garo: A Comparative Study of Matrilineal Systems (Paris, 1967).

— "Religion in Primitive Society", (New York, 1967).

— "On the Geological Structure of the Khasi Hills with Observations on the Technology of that District" (Calcutta, 1954).

— *Geology of the Khasi Hills* (1863).

— "Folk Tales of Assam" (Delhi, 1967).

— "The Place of Khadduh—the young Khasi and Syntheng Society", *Vanyajati*, Vol. V (1956).

— "The Importance of the Egg and Cock in the Khasi Hills", *Vanyajati*, Vol. V, (April, 1956).

— "Christianity and the Tribes of North-east India", *A Common Perspective for North-east India* (1967).

— "Music of the Hill People of North-east India", *A Common Perspective for North-east India* (1967).

— "Years of Change in Bengal and Assam", C. Lal. "A common Perspective for North-east India", (1967).

— "A common Perspective for North-east India", Collection of papers at the Seminar at the University of North-Eastern India, December, 1967).

— "Khasi Grammar" (1891).

— "Khasi Folklore", (Carnarvon O'Connell, 1967).

— "Revival of the Khasi Hills", (1967).

— "Descriptive Account of Assam", (1856).

- "Khasi Hills". Selection from *Calcutta* (1856).
- May, D. *Centenary History of the Pro* (1934).
- Burman. "Hillmen of North-East India Socio-Economic Development", *Vanyajati*, (July, 1967).
- David. "Principles of Khasi Custom", *N* (1934).
- "Principles of Khasi Culture", *Folklor*
- Hipshon. "The Khasi Heritage--The Culture", *The Khasi Heritage* (1969).
- Sarat Chandra. "Khasi Kinship Terms", Vol. I (1921).
- housdhari, Tarak Chandra. "The Khasis' papers, New Series, No. 4 (1935).
- lev, Leela. "Kwai (Betel) Among the anthropologist, Vol. IX, No. 2, Dec. 1957-
- dananda. *Profiles of Tribal Culture in* (1965).
- y, Keshari Nath. "Impact of Christianity of the Chainpur belt in the Chotanagpur; Cultural Process", *American Anthropologist* (October, 1968)
- idit, Pater. *Die Monkhmer Vilker ein B* *Volken Zentralasiens*.
- David. *Memoirs* (Ed. by White—1832)
- Khasi. *Essays on Khasi Heritage*, (Shill
- pta, K.P. *Christian Missionaries in West*
- , Maham. "Nongkrem Festival" *Ess* (Shillong, 1969).
- , Kamaleshwar. *Meghalaya : Triumph of* (1970).
- chaudhori, N.K. "Anthropology and the Common Perspective for North-East India
- dell, Col. "Account of the Assam Tribes Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- , *Behind Mud Walls* (1930-1960).
- Lt. "Notes on the Khasi Hills and Pec the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Vol. 13. Part

## LITERATURE

- arello. *Ki Dienjat U Longehuwa* (Shillong, 1961).
- ..., G. *Ka Riti Jong Ka Ri Laiphew Syiem* (unpublished, printed 1971).
- ..., Nelson. *Ka Jingshai ka Ri Khasi*.
- lananda, Swami. *Shi Kyntien Ar Kyutiam Khasi*.
- ..., Angell G. *Ka History Jong Ka Ba* (Shillong, 1956).
- ..., loh, Homiwel. *Ka Niam Khasi* (Shillong, 1964).
- *Ki Syiem Khasi Bad Synteng* (Shillong, 1964).
- *Ka Pomblang Nongkrem bad Ka Thang*.
- ..., doh, Radhon Singh. (Talk—30.8.1970) "Khasi Culture."
- "In Memory of U Soso Tham", *Meghalaya* (Shillong, September 1972).
- ..., doh, Sngi Rev. Fr. *Ka Riti Khyndew bhuwa-Manshua jong ka Ri Bhoi* (Shillong, 1965).
- ..., on Singh Berry. *Ka Jingsneng Tymmeor Khasi ha ka rukom Rwai Phawar*, (unpublished, printed 1971).
- Babu Jeebon. *Ka Niam jong Ki Khasi* (Shillong, 1965).
- *Ka Kitab Shaphang Uwei U Blei*, (1900) (Shillong, 1965).
- Sib Charan Jait Dkhar. *Ka Niam-Ki Khasi* (Shillong, 1959 & 1966).
- ..., Roy, B.K. *History Jong Ka Ri Khasi* (Shillong, 1969).
- ..., Kynpham. *Jingadang ka Jingspel Bad Kyntien Khasi Da Ki Dak Roman* (1969).
- ..., Kynpham. *Ka Jingim U Babu Jeebon ha* (Shillong, 1965).
- *Ka Kitab Ka Niam-Khein Ki Khasi*—(1965).

# Glossary

(Note: Words arranged in Khasi alphabetical order)

Khasi	English	Khasi	English
<b>A</b>		<i>khadduh</i>	youngest daughter
<i>ai</i>	give	<i>khaw kham</i>	handful of rice
<i>apot</i>	misfortune	<i>kham</i>	handful
<i>awria</i>	licentious	<i>khein</i>	divination
<b>B</b>		<i>khoh</i>	round
			native basket
<i>ba</i>	that	<i>khrong</i>	beg, levy, collect
<i>bakha</i>	cousin	<i>khuri</i>	cup
<i>basan</i>	state official in K & J Hills, an elder	<i>khublei</i>	God bless, etc.
<i>Bhoi</i>	Khasis living in the low land, north part of Khasi-Jaintia Hills.	<i>kyrwang</i>	stripe, cloth stripes
<i>biria</i>	amusement	<i>khynriam</i>	people living in Khasi areas
<i>Biskorom</i>	god of iron	<i>kiad</i>	alcohol, drink
<i>Blei</i>	God	<i>ki</i>	they
<i>briew</i>	person	<i>kitab</i>	book
<b>K</b>		<i>klim</i>	commit adultery
<i>ka</i>	She	<i>kmie</i>	mother
<i>kaviraj</i>	a person who gives herbal medicine	<i>kmierad</i>	grandmother
<i>kha</i>	born, father's sister	<i>kot</i>	book
		<i>kpa</i>	father
		<i>ksuid-khrei</i>	devil, evil spirits
		<i>kur</i>	relatives of

Khasi	English	Khasi	English
<i>si</i>	in-law		ceremony
<i>woh</i>	information, message		feast (esp. of pork)
<i>mbat</i>	herb	<i>law kyntang</i>	sacred fore
	<b>D</b>	<i>Lei hukum</i>	goddess gives order
<i>char</i>	plains people		world
<i>wai</i>	medicine	<i>longing</i>	family
<i>ei</i>	ashes	<i>Lukhumai</i>	goddess of
<i>ma</i>	tobacco	<i>Lyngdoh</i>	priest
<i>r</i>	picture, diagram, figure, form	<i>Lyngngam</i>	Khasi hi (inhabiting the Khasi
	<b>NG</b>		
<i>uh</i>	bow, pay homage		<b>M</b>
	<b>H</b>	<i>Marangbah</i>	eldest n uncle
<i>na</i>	state	<i>mawlong-</i>	
<i>kum</i>	order, command	<i>mawteh</i>	great rook
	<b>I</b>	<i>mawbah</i>	big cromle ancestral b
<i>v</i>	mature, old	<i>mawbynma</i>	pository
<i>chalai</i>	gambling	<i>maw-</i>	memorial s
<i>rbei</i>	female ancestor	<i>shyrang</i>	dolmen, s
<i>vduh</i>	Biggest market (Shillong)		stone
<i>r</i>	house, family	<i>maw-</i>	
	<b>J</b>	<i>kynthei</i>	large flat s slab suppo four small
<i>d</i>	kind, kin, clan		set on end
<i>nsem</i>	female garment	<i>mynsiem</i>	spirit, soul
<i>gkhan</i>	egg used in a divination		<b>N</b>
<i>ang</i>	covenant	<i>niam</i>	religion
	<b>L</b>	<i>niamra</i>	abyss, hell
<i>ndoh</i>	celebrate a	<i>norigknia</i>	one who sacrifice s
	ago		

Khasi	English	Khasi	
<i>han</i>	diviner	<i>ri-kur</i>	land
<i>lam</i>	leader		belong
<i>lab</i>	preacher		clan
<i>ha</i>	sacrifice one-self for the sake of others	<i>rishot</i> <i>ri-shyueng</i>	pillar land the
	a seed of a plant which the Khasis used to wash their with in the early days		daugh area) for re monie
<i>ong</i>	first	<i>riti</i>	establi toms
<b>P</b>			<b>S</b>
<i>r</i>	folk story, legend	<i>sang</i>	taboo
<i>g</i>	generation	<i>seng</i>	estab
<i>ng</i>	foreigner (Euro- pean or English)		by fo
<i>ar</i>	couplet	<i>shad</i>	organ
<i>um-</i>		<i>shnong</i>	dance
<i>vah</i>	household gods	<i>sohpirah</i>	villag
<i>tyrpad</i>	household deity which blesses the family	<i>spah</i>	a fru wash wealt comf
	make a ritual feast for the dead	<i>suid kiad</i>	tente pour coho
<i>lang</i>	goat sacrifice sin	<i>Suid- rangbah Syiem</i>	chief King Quee
<b>R</b>			rule,
<i>n</i>	country	<i>synshar</i>	
<i>id</i>	hill place		<b>T</b>
	common land, State land, public land	<i>tap kpoh</i>	the s safe
<i>nti</i>	a private landed property	<i>Thawlang</i>	first granc

st	English	Khasi
7	evil spirit supposed to turn a disease (measles) for the worst husband	<i>Wahadadar</i>
	owner, master, lord	<i>War</i>
p	betel-leaf, pan leaf	

## U

he  
 well where sacrifices and oaths are performed

# Index

- one Christ 80  
 nts' Church 77-78  
 74  
 can missionaries 79, 80-81, 182  
 ha, Rev. 70  
 64-65  
 an Church 77  
 an Tham 68, 120  
 7, 100  
 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14-15, 23, 25,  
 58-59, 70-71, 73-75, 77-78, 86,  
 94, 118, 120-121, 131, 138,  
 160, 172, 178-79  
 cs 10, 15, 27  
 , Duwan 118  
 a Desh 4, 7, 61, 72  
 (s): 60-62, 81; Mission 190  
 ni 70  
 5, 10, 15, 20, 46, 94, 124;  
 nion about Khasi religion 43;  
 s about conception of ances-  
 worship 50  
 (is) 15, 69, 101, 172  
 Rev 80  
 9: 5, 8, 25-26, 29, 36, 48, 68,  
 76, 96, 99, 101, 108, 126, 132,  
 , 142, 147, 149, 161, 170, 177,  
 ; agriculture in 33; weaving  
 4; social hierarchy 97; women  
 05  
 ranj 60  
 Cotton 77-78  
 karma 48, 144  
 ma 48  
 , Pastor D K. 80  
 interprets the Khasi religion  
 w (market deities) 35, 47  
 H. 124  
 gh 67, 94  
 aputra: 4; Valley 4  
 o Samaj 84-85  
 ey Pugh, Rev. 70  
 Buranjis 14  
 Burgis, Pastor 79  
 Burmese 10-11  
 Calcutta: 58-60, 67  
 University 68, 70  
 Calvinistic Church  
 Carey, William 60, 67  
 Catechumens 74  
 Catholic Salesian M  
 Census: of 1911 69,  
 Ceylon: 80, Penteco  
 81  
 Chainpur 73  
 Chakravarty, Nellar  
 Chandi (Goddess) 25  
 Cherra (Sobra): 7, 3  
 67, 87, 94-95,  
 123 129, 138, 1  
 166, 174; dialect  
 Cherrapunjee 2, 5  
 75, 77, 81-82,  
 116-117, 124, 12  
 Factory 176  
 China 59, 62, 170, 1  
 Chotanagpur 73  
 Christ Emmanuel 8  
 Christ Jesuits 75  
 Christ King College  
 Christ National Ch  
 Church: of Chr st  
 77; of God 82, 84  
 Christ 83  
 Cockburn 22  
 Constitution of Indi  
 Criminal Procedure  
 Dacca 85-6, 138  
 Dalhousie, Lord 66  
 David Scott: 5, 39, 5  
 introduced the  
 Khasis 106  
 Diocesan Earthquak



- 5  
*Ropmay* 64, 68  
*osco* 74, 127, 171; *School* 75  
 37, 99, 137, 166  
*India Company* 7, 59, 77, 90.  
*els* 8, 28  
*Dr* 153, 187  
*urma War* (1824) 58  
*World War* 74  
 51-52  
 ), 8, 15, 22, 48, 179, 185; *Hills*  
 n, Rev. A. 77  
 th 58, 62, 73-74  
 n *Fathers* 102; *Salvatorians*  
 n' 11, 20, 29, 30, 153; has  
 ined culture 42  
*Manick* 94  
 5, 37, 137  
*Rai Diengdoh* 124  
 well, Fr. Elias 76  
 es, Rev. Griffith 66-67  
 r: 5, 6; testified to the excel-  
 t quality of Khasi iron 34  
*Christian Brothers* 74  
*Sahib see David Scott*  
*Simon* 71  
*Sunderland* 82  
 69, 80, 83, 129  
 01  
*Okhar* 17  
 a(s): 22, 48, 179, 185, *Hills* 4,  
 10, 58, 62, 71, 79, 138, 185;  
 ars 8  
 Roe 62  
 (ese) 32, 51, 131  
 parties 127  
 ah's *Witness* 80  
 Fathers of Bengal 74  
 ongs 8  
*Gatphoh* 69  
 e, Rev. Thomas; 62-63, 67, 116;  
 t the title of the 'Father of  
 hasi Literature' 123  
 79, 82  
 g 143-45  
*el* 46  
*Ka lawhei*, 52, 14  
*Ka Ing Kristan* 7  
*Ka Lei Hukum* 48  
*Ka Nabon* 64  
*Ka Pateng Krista*  
*Ka Riti* 37-38, 11  
*Kamup* 4, 111  
*Kerala*, contribu-  
 ests and Sisters 7  
*Khadsawphra* (N  
*Kharang* 82, 129  
*Khasi(s)*: mean  
 population 9  
 12; society in  
 15-38; origin  
*Niam* 2, 39, 4  
 125-26, 141-  
 193; influence  
 their religion  
 ship among  
 missionaries  
 impact of w  
 social life 95,  
 among 115-12  
 nemy and in  
 sionary impac  
 37, significant  
 set-up 137-41  
 on Khasi N  
 societal and c  
 to religio-soc  
 causes 150-57  
 the present d  
 tical set-up  
 gious attitud  
 against m  
 Khasi State  
*Khaw Kham* 69  
*Khyntioms* 8, 36  
*Khyrim*: 6, 52, 1  
*Ki Parom* 45  
*Kiew Ing*, cerem  
*Kine Singh* 68  
*Kpoh* 15, 165, 16  
*Ktien Nagari* 23  
*Kupli* (the water  
*Kupardan* 113  
*Kur* 15, 65, 99, 1  
 165-66  
*Kyrhai Warjri* 83  
*Laitkynsew* 73-7  
*Laitlyngkot* 84,  
*Lalungs* 8, 22  
*Lamdoh* 21  
*Land Reform C*  
*Larsingh Bubu* 1  
*Le Ferre*, Rev.

- Le. Khyrdop* (God of H.ghways) 47  
*Lepchas* 180  
*Lewis, Mrs William* 64, 66, 117, 123  
*Lewis Rev. William* 64-66, 123  
*Lish, Rev. Alexander* 63, 115  
*Logan* 10, 23  
*Lokeswaranand, Swami* 85  
*London Baptist Society* 59, 60;  
     *Missionary Society* 62  
*Lore to Sisters* 74  
*Lukhima* 48  
*Lushais* 101  
*Lyngdoh*: 6, 24, 38, 44, 161; his talks  
     on the principles of Khasi cul-  
     ture 42; elaborates Khasi religi-  
     ous view 43  
*Lyngnam(s)* 8, 21, 34, 36, 55, 96, 99,  
     105, 110, 128-29, 132, 142, 146-47,  
     149, 170, 177, 186  
*Lyngkyrdem* 114, 166  
  
*MacCormack*: 14, 48, 63; mentions  
     two great Khasi deities 46; des-  
     cribes minor deities 47  
*Mairang*: 5, 67, 129; Church 68  
*Margaret Barr* 82, 129, 137  
*Mawali* 66  
*Mawbuh* 17-18, 55, 100  
*Mawdon* 6, 67  
*Mawhati* 76  
*Mawkhar* 67, 131  
*Mawmluh* 62-63  
*Mawphlang*: 6, 68; Church Assem-  
     bly 70, 102  
*Mawroh* 161  
*Mawsmat* 60, 62-63  
*McClennan* 21  
*Meerworth*: 11, 94, 104; defines  
     Khasi religion 42  
*Meghalaya* 2, 4, 121, 139, 167, 170,  
     176, 186, 188  
*Mikirs* 8, 22  
*Missionary Society, London* 59  
*Mission Mairang* 129  
*Mizoram*: 96, 121, 140, 157, 178-79,  
     193-94; purely tribal and predom-  
     inantly Christian 1  
*Mizos, percentage of Christianity*  
     among 184  
*Mon-Khmer*: 10-12; language, 23  
*Mon-Lyngdoh, Rev.* 83  
*Mundari Culture* 154  
*Mundas* 154  
*Mylliem* 6, 138  
  
*Naga(s)*: 28, 101, 184; Hill 193-94  
*Nagaland* 1, 121, 157  
*Nakane* 5, 15, 19  
*Nazareth Hospital* 75  
  
*Nehru, Jawaharlal*  
*Nepalis* 8, 101  
*Ngap Kynta* 17  
*Nichols-Roy, Rev.*  
*Nongialam Kristan*  
*Nongkhlaw* 6, 58, 1  
*Nonghndas* 110  
*Nongkrem*: 46-47, 50  
*Nongkseh* 123  
*Nonglum* 80  
*Nongsawlia* 64, 66,  
*Nongstoin* 6, 75, 13  
*Nongtariang Jaid* 1  
*North East Fronti*  
*North East India*  
     70  
  
*Pal, Krishna Chan*  
     183  
*Pandua* 60  
*Pary, Rev. Robert*  
*Pleyte* 11  
*Pomblang*: 49; Fes  
*Presbyterian Miss*  
*Pytwarsla* 126, 129,  
*Rabindra Sangeet*  
*Rama Krishna M*  
     118, 121, 140,  
     180, 182, 192  
*Rhynriams* 96  
*Richards, Dr Owe*  
*Rilang R.* 47  
*Roberts, Mrs* 66  
*Roberts, Rev. Joh*  
*Roman Catholic(s)*  
     73  
*Ram Singh* 69  
*Rotary Club* 188  
*Roy, Babu Jeebon*  
*Roy, Benode Beha*  
*Roy-Burman* 160,  
*Roy, Sib Charan* 1  
*Roy, Wolley Moh*  
  
*Sadya Charan Das*  
*Saisohpen* 59  
*Salesians* 74-75  
*Samaddar, Brothe*  
*Saturaja* 80  
*Sawrai* 62  
*Seng Khasi*: 73, 96  
     192; guiding  
     helping the r  
     Khasi culture  
*Scrampole Missio*  
*Seventh Day Adv*  
*Shakti* 48

- Shella* 5, 6, 25, 48, 59, 65-66, 73-74,  
 82, 84, 86-87, 119, 128, 134,  
 142-43, 145, 163  
*Shifting cultivation* 176  
*Shillong* 2, 4, 35, 66-70, 74-75, 77-78,  
 82-83, 87, 91, 106, 110-11, 114,  
 118-19, 131, 138, 144-45, 161, 166,  
 172  
*Shod Suk Mvnsiem* 114  
*Singh, Kamani* 187  
*Singh, Hajom Kissor* 81-82  
*Sisters of our Lady of the Mission* 75  
*Smrit* 75, 147-48  
*Society of Divine Saviour* 74  
*Sohbarumpiji* 87, 110, 145, 171  
*Sohra* see *Cherra*  
*Soe Tham* 124  
*St. Bridget* 52  
*St. Edmund's School* 74  
*St. Mary's College* 75  
*St. Paul Minor Seminary* 75  
*Swer* 47  
*Syibet* 11-12, 58, 60-61, 65, 76, 90,  
 111-12, 118-19, 127, 138  
*Sympet rock* 47  
*Synhar* 43, 144  
*Tarani Purkayestha* 87  
*Teer-Khela* 126  
*Thangshaisi* 84  
*Thawlang* 52, 145  
*Tira Singh* 65  
*Trot Singh* 127, 138  
*Tomlin, Rev Jacob* 59, 62, 92  
*Treaty of Yandaboo* 58, 138  
*Tylor* 42, 48  
*U Blei* 46, 50, 55, 101, 106, 117  
*U Khaxi Mynta* 124  
*U Khilani* 47  
*U Leilang Spah* 46  
*Unsohsun* 102  
*Union Christian College* 70  
*Unitarians* 81-82, 85, 87, 121, 182  
*Unitham* 83  
*Uravns* 73  
*Urih* 47  
*U Rvngken* 47, 55  
*U Siani Niang Thyliew* 47  
*U Sidiha* 145  
*U Thlen* 28, 112-13, 116, 128, 141,  
 143-46  
*Vaishnava Sect* 84, 145  
*Vernier Elwin* 96  
*Vishnu* 84  
*Vivekananda* 85, 110  
*Wahadadanthup* 6  
*Wahlang, D.N.S.* 124  
*War area* 17, 36-37, 64, 84, 95-96,  
 103-04, 106, 177  
*Weking dance* 181  
*Welsh* 104, Calvinistic Methodist  
 Mission 59, 62-63, Mission 68-69,  
 71-73, 109, 115, 127, 130, 171,  
 Presbyterian Foreign Mission 59,  
 62, 81, 117, 121, Presbyterians 76,  
 118  
*Wychif* 139